William Winter.

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OLD FRIENDS

CHARLES DICKENS

From a drawing by Sol. Eytinge

OLD FRIENDS

BEING LITERARY RECOLLECTIONS

OF OTHER DAYS

BY

WILLIAM WINTER

They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here!
Their very memory is fair and bright
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

HENRY VAUGHAN

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Published, May, 1909

To the Memory of My Earliest Friend
My Loved and Honored Father
CAPTAIN CHARLES WINTER
I Dedicate These Recollections.

He knew my love, and wheresoe'er it be,
His spirit knows! There is no need of vow
Of fond remembrance,—yet there is for me
A kind of comfort to avouch it now.

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PREFACE

My book of "Other Days," *containing Chronicles and Memories of Actors, has been received by the public with gratifying favor, and that favor has impelled me to act on a suggestion, coming from several sources, that I should write a companion book, containing Chronicles and Memories of Authors. The result is this book of* "Old Friends." *I was introduced into the companionship of authors early in life, having published my first book,—which led to acquaintance with some of them,—in* 1854, *and I have had friendly intercourse with many of them, extending over a period of more than fifty years. Some of my recollections of that intercourse are here expressed, with all the kindness that is consistent with truth, and perhaps my readers will find a little pleasure in rambling with me along the grass-grown pathways of the Past, where the idols of my youthful enthusiasm and the comrades of my pen remain unchanged.*

Yet let not those readers suppose that I write as a praiser of the Past, in detraction of the Present. Reverence for that which is old, only because it is old, has often been imputed to me, always without reason or justice. There is no folly more egregious than that

which judges the Present by the Past, unless it be the folly that judges the Past by the Present. Having been a continual writer for the press and for the booksellers since early youth, much that I have written has, necessarily, been ephemeral; but many themes appertaining to contemporary periods have been expounded by my pen and celebrated with ardent enthusiasm. In these books of mine, "OTHER DAYS" *and* "OLD FRIENDS," *the intention is clearly signified, not of the celebration of To-day, but of the reminiscence of Yesterday; and therefore no reason exists why praises of the Present should be expected in them, or the absence of it be deplored. With regard to the Present, in Literature and Dramatic Art, it is my purpose to publish several books. These sketches only represent a Past that I personally knew. If by chance they should survive their little day, they may aid the future historian in tracing the literary movement in America, and throw some light upon the personality of those who guided it. It should be added that much of the material of this book was first made known in "The Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post," but has been revised and augmented for publication in the present form. If found tedious, I would plead Sir Walter Scott's apologetical remark, that "Old men may be permitted to speak long, because they cannot, in the course of Nature, have long to speak."*

W. W.

New York, April 23, 1909.

"For precious friends hid in death's dateless night."

SHAKESPEARE.

"When musing on companions gone
We doubly feel ourselves alone."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"Shades of departed joys around me rise,
With many a face that smiles on me no more,
With many a voice, that thrills of transport gave,
Now silent as the grass that tufts their grave."

SAMUEL ROGERS.

When now the twilight hour comes on
And Memory broods o'er pleasures gone,
While Joy with Sorrow softly blends,
'Tis sweet to think of vanish'd friends,
And dream that, close behind the veil,
They wait to give the welcome hail!
Strange hope! almost akin to fear—
Yet who would wish to lose it here?

W. W.

I.

LONGFELLOW.

The year 1889 brought the centenary of Cooper. The year 1907 brought the centenary of Longfellow. Those men were the leaders of American literature in the nineteenth century, and they remain the two great representative American authors. Longfellow is the foremost of our poets. Cooper is the foremost of our novelists. Many years ago, in London, in conversation with the most expert, accomplished, and fascinating of story-tellers, Wilkie Collins, that excellent writer said to me: "America has produced one great novelist; I wonder whether you can tell me his name." "The name of him," I said, "is James Fenimore Cooper." "Right" exclaimed Collins, in obvious satisfaction; "the author of Leatherstocking was a man of wonderful genius." Cooper, who died in 1851, when aged sixty-two, I did not know and never saw; but in boyhood I

worshipped him, and in age I still read his romantic stories,—so pure in spirit, so fine in invention, so beautiful in picture and, aside from some inflexibility of language in the sentimental passages, so rich, true, natural, and various in characteristic dialogue,—with delight and admiration.

Longfellow I knew well, beginning my acquaintance with him at a time of life when the affections are ardent, when the confiding fancy exults in its ideals, and when the mind is susceptible to the charm of romance. The poet was forty-seven when first we met, and from that time, for twenty-eight years, it was my happy fortune to hold a place in his affectionate esteem. To me, from the first, he was an object of reverence. I loved him, and I rejoice to remember that he honored me with his friendship, and that I possessed and enjoyed that blessing till the day of his death. During the years from 1853-'54 to 1859-'60 I was often a guest in his house, at Cambridge, and I had the rare privilege of his example, his conversation, and his counsel. In the winter of 1859-'60 I established my residence in New York and could no longer be near to him;

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Photograph by Sarony

but he frequently wrote to me, and I visited him as often as I could. "Come and sit in my children's chair," he said to me, on the occasion of my latest visit; "you *never* forget me; *you* always come to see me." He knew my love for him, and he trusted it. I saw him as he was; and, within my observation and knowledge of men, which have been exceptionally wide, a man more noble, gentle, lovable and true never lived.

In certain musical and beautiful words, written on a day in March, 1855, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow hallowed the city of Portland, Maine, where he was born, February 27, 1807, and where he passed his youth. He came of an old family, of Yorkshire, England, and on the maternal side he was descended from John Alden and Priscilla Mullens, of the Mayflower Massachusetts Colony. He was graduated from Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, in 1825, and, after passing four years in travel and study in Europe, he occupied a chair in that college, as a professor of modern languages. That office he held for more than five years, resigning it in 1835, in order to make another European tour, prepara-

tory to the acceptance of a professorship of modern languages in Harvard College. He was married, in 1831, to Miss Mary Potter, of Portland, who died in November, 1835, when travelling with him in Holland. In December, 1836, he established his residence in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and began his labor as a Harvard professor. In July, 1843, he was married to Miss Frances Appleton, of Boston, with whom, for eighteen years, he lived in perfect happiness, ended by her sudden, tragical death, by fire, in the summer of 1861. He resigned his office at Harvard College in 1854, and from that time till the last he devoted himself exclusively to literary authorship. In 1866 he visited Europe for the third and last time, remaining there eighteen months. In the autumn of 1869 he returned to his home in Cambridge,—an old Colonial mansion known as the Cragie House and celebrated as having once been occupied by Washington,—and there he resided till the end of his days. He died on March 24, 1882, and his body was buried, beside that of his second wife, in the cemetery of Mount Auburn, where

rest the mortal relics of so many of his friends. His works, in prose and verse,—the first of which was "Outre-Mer," published in 1835, and the last of which was "Michael Angelo," published in 1883,—fill eleven large volumes, and they have been translated, in all or in part, into fifteen languages. His statue, according to present design, will be erected in a meadow opposite to his former home, overlooking the pleasant river Charles, which he loved, and which he has celebrated in felicitous and tender song. His bust, in Westminster Abbey,—the first monument to an American author ever placed in that venerable temple,—stands in the Poets' Corner, near to the effigy of Dryden, and looks across the graves of Beaumont, Cowley, Denham, Tennyson, and Browning, to the hallowed spot where the dust of Campbell mingles with that of Sheridan, Henderson, Cumberland, and Macaulay, and where the remains of Garrick, Doctor Johnson, and Henry Irving slumber side by side.

A reason for thinking that Longfellow is the foremost of American poets is the belief that he

was more objective than any of the other bards, and was elementally actuated by an impulse of greater and broader design. Individual lyrics might be named, written by other American poets, that, perhaps, surpass, in the element of passionate inspiration, anything that proceeded from Longfellow's pen. Poe's "Haunted Palace," Halleck's "Marco Bozzaris," Story's "Cleopatra," and Whittier's "St. John de Matha" are types of ardent poetic emotion; but no other American poet has produced a fabric of imaginative poetry that rises to the height of Longfellow's "Golden Legend" and is sustained with such copious feeling and diversified with such affluence of invention, unflagging interest of material, and perfection of taste.

Another reason why Longfellow stands foremost among our poets is that he possessed and manifested a more comprehensive, various, and felicitous command of verbal art than has been displayed by any other American poet; while still another reason is that he speaks with a voice that is more universal than personal. "Evangeline," "The Building of the

Ship," "The Golden Legend," "The Saga of King Olaf," "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and "Hiawatha" are works that illumine the general imagination, express the general human heart, and are freighted with the general life of man.

Longfellow once told me that he sometimes wrote poems which he considered too personal, too delicate, for publication; but he did not write exclusively for himself; he wrote for others; and more fully than any other American poet he represents the two cardinal principles which are of the highest import to the human race,—nobility of individual life and faith in the divine government of the world. He is absolutely pure; he turns to beauty everything that he touches; and he continually imparts that conviction of spiritual immortality which alone can lift mankind above the dread of death; that absolute trust in a celestial destiny which alone can inculcate patient endurance of our inevitable sorrows, the natural and unavoidable consequence of mortality. Much of the possible enjoyment of life is sacrificed in the taking of futile precautions as

to the future; for, as said by Wordsworth and taught by Longfellow:

> Disasters—do the best we can—
> Will reach us, great and small,
> And he is oft the wisest man
> Who is not wise at all.

Longfellow's place in literature is not among the marvels of creative genius, the portents that dazzle and bewilder, such as Milton, Dryden, Byron and Coleridge, but with the benefactors of mankind, that soothe and bless. Lowell associated him with the English poet, Thomas Gray, whose works, beautiful as they are (the immortal Elegy being unequalled by anything of the kind in our language), do not contain a tithe of Longfellow's humanity. To my mind he more resembles, in essential ways, the earlier English poet, Abraham Cowley. But, however that may be, his poetry takes a wide range, and it appeals to a vast number of persons, because it expresses for each of them, simply, directly, and admirably, the emotion that each of them feels and would like to express. It does not always elevate the reader, but it always satisfies; and it always elevates the subject.

An anecdote that is amusing and at the same time significant was told to me by the clever, versatile, popular, lamented James R. Osgood, once prominent as a publisher in Boston and London. Mr. Osgood, who began his career as a bookseller in the shop at "the Old Corner" of School and Washington streets, Boston, was accosted in that shop (so he related) by a stranger, who expressed the wish to buy a volume of poetry, as a Christmas present for a girl. "I don't want Byron or Shelley," he remarked, "or anything of that kind; I want something like Longfellow. He suits the girls and he suits me. He's a good, *safe, family* poet."

In one point of view that remark might seem to be a disparagement, an implication of conventionality and commonplace. In another point of view it is a tribute. All thoughtful men are aware of the tremendous influence that reading exerts over the mind of youth. The things that we read when we are young sink deep into the memory and are never wholly forgotten. They color our thoughts and they more or less affect the conduct of our lives. Byron's "Don Juan,"

—considered with reference to its scope, its variety of subjects, its feeling, its humor, its wit, its worldly wisdom, its satire, its poetry, and its wonderful mastery of the language,—is one of the most colossal fabrics of literary art existent in any literature. Southey's "Curse of Kehama," notwithstanding its supreme felicity of fancy and its exquisite finish of style, is a somewhat arid composition. But there is no father who would not prefer that his child should read "The Curse of Kehama" rather than "Don Juan." In one of his letters Scott has wisely remarked: "It is not passages of ludicrous indelicacy that corrupt the manners of a people; it is the sentimental story, half lewd, half methodistic, that debauches the understanding."

The notion that everything should be generally read only because it happens to have been written is radically mischievous as well as unsound. An idea has long been prevalent, and it happens to be more than commonly prevalent now (because of a general trend toward luxury and sensuality, combined with the admired publicity of decadent and degenerate authors and actors), that delirium

is genius, and that without convulsion there cannot be power. It was said of the Scotch essayist, Gilfillan, that he seemed to think himself a great painter because he painted with a large brush. "The first time I ever saw that remarkable woman," says *Mr. Crummles,* in "Nicholas Nickleby,"—referring to his formidable wife,—"she was standing on her head, upon the top of a pole, surrounded with fireworks." A certain fine frenzy is, doubtless, a part of the temperament of genius; but just as the sunshine permeates space without a sound, so does the magical light of genius illumine the human soul without effort and without strife. The comet, seeming to flash lawless through the untravelled heavens, may prove a momentary wonder; the stupendous, calm order of the solar system, without which all life would instantly be hurled into chaos, is not simply a marvel, it is a perpetual blessing. Genius that is erratic and splendid shines but to dazzle, and it soon is quenched. The lasting value of genius is beneficence. "I have been, perhaps," said that great poet and still greater man, Sir Walter Scott, toward the close

of his life, "the most voluminous author of the day, and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and that I have written nothing which, on my death-bed, I should wish blotted."

Longfellow made himself known to thousands of hearts, and every heart is purer and stronger for the knowledge of him. "Shall there be no repose in literature?" he once wrote: "Shall every author be like a gladiator, with swollen veins and distended nostrils, as if each encounter was for life or death?" How truly Longfellow was a poet of power,—not the power that makes fireworks, but the power that can rise to the dignity of a great theme and evenly sustain itself in perfect poise,—his noble poem of "The Goblet of Life" will testify. Nothing but poetic inspiration can account for such poems as his "Sandalphon," "The Beleaguered City," "The Ballad of Carmilhan," "The Open Window," "The Footsteps of Angels," and "The Chamber Over the Gate." Time may forget such narratives as "The Courtship of Miles Standish" and such

plays as "The Spanish Student," but never the sublime development of his "Christus"; never the solemn pæan of patient will that he uttered in "The Light of Stars."

Disparagement of Longfellow began early, and, though not now often audible, it has endured. The Boston "transcendentalists" could not abide him. Certain foreign critics found him more "mediæval" than American. That eminent Catholic poet, Coventry Patmore,—who wrote "The Angel in the House," and who emitted the amazing announcement that Thomas Buchanan Read's autumnal poem of "The Closing Scene" is superior to Gray's "Elegy,"—elegantly referred to him, in one of his published letters, as "Longwindedfellow." The complaint,—which is one that more or less touches all American literature,—proceeds now, as it has all along proceeded, from an irrational disposition, first to revert to the berserker state of feeling, and then to exact, from a new country, new forms of speech. Thus, for example, literary authorities in England, some of them conspicuous for station and ability, have accepted, and, in some

cases, have extolled beyond the verge of extravagance, one American writer, the eccentric Walt Whitman, for no better reason than because he discarded all laws of literary composition, and, instead of writing either prose or verse, composed an uncouth catalogue of miscellaneous objects and images, generally commonplace, sometimes coarse, and sometimes filthy. That auctioneer's list of topics and appetites, intertwisted with a formless proclamation of carnal propensities and universal democracy, has been hailed as grandly original and distinctively American, only because it is crude, shapeless, and vulgar. The writings of Walt Whitman, in so far as they are anything, are philosophy: they certainly are not poetry: and they do not possess even the merit of an original style; for Macpherson, with his "Ossian" forgeries; Martin Farquhar Tupper, with his "Proverbial Philosophy," and Samuel Warren, with his tumid "Ode," were extant long before the advent of Whitman. Furthermore, Plato's writings were not unknown; while the brotherhood of man had been proclaimed in Judea, with practical consequences that are still

obvious. No author has yet made a vehicle of expression that excels, in any way whatever, or for any purpose, the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton. In the hands of any artist who can use them the old forms of expression are abundantly adequate, and so, likewise, are the old subjects; at all events, nobody has yet discovered any theme more fruitful than the human heart, human experience, man in his relation to Nature and to God.

Invidious criticism of Longfellow's poetry was written, with peculiar zest, by Miss Margaret Fuller, a native of Cambridge, who married an Italian and became Countess d'Ossoli. She was a clever woman, of a somewhat tart temper, and prone to the peevish ill-nature of a discontented mind. In the early days of "The New-York Tribune" she was a contributor to that paper and, more or less, to the perplexities of its eccentric founder, Horace Greeley. Both Longfellow and his wife spoke of her, to me, with obvious, though courteously veiled, dislike. Her health was not robust; she suffered from some form of spinal disease that caused her occasionally to wriggle

when seated. She figures among the writers commemorated by the venomous industry of Rufus Wilmot Griswold, and she is chiefly remembered as having perished in a shipwreck on the southern coast of Long Island.

"The poet aims to give pleasure," Longfellow more than once said to me, "but the purpose of the critic is, usually, to give pain." Speaking of the numerous papers that were sent to him, containing notices of his poems, he told me that it was his custom never to read an article written in an unpleasant spirit. "If, after reading a few lines, I find that the intention is to wound," he said, "I drop the paper into the fire, and that is the end of it." A kindred feeling was expressed by Sir Walter Scott, who, referring to Jeffrey, the eminent Edinburgh reviewer, wrote: "I have neither time nor inclination to be perpetually making butterflies that he may have the pleasure of pulling their wings and legs off"; and again, remarking on the same subject, Scott said: "I would rather please one man of genius than all the great critics in the kingdom." Longfellow, of course, knew that it is possible for criticism

to be creative (as it sometimes is, and as notably it was when written by Matthew Arnold), and likewise that it can help the right by opposing the wrong; but his preference, always and rightly, was for the creative order of mind. One of the wisest and best of all precepts is expressed in his monition that "he who carries bricks to the building of every one's house will never build one for himself."

The most acrimonious critic of Longfellow's poetry was his famous contemporary, Edgar Poe (1809-'49). Poe's criticisms of Longfellow are included in the standard edition of his works, edited by Stedman and Woodberry. They are rank with injustice and hostility. In judging of the conduct and writings of Poe, however, allowance has to be made for the strain of insanity that was in him, and for the mordant bitterness that had been engendered in his mind by penury and grief. Poe lived at a time when writers were very poorly paid, and furthermore his genius was of a rare and exquisite order, lovely in texture, sombre in quality, monotonous in its utterance, and obviously unfit for the hack-work of news-

papers and magazines. His really appreciative audience is a small one, even now, and probably it will long, or always, remain a small one. Such poetry as his "Haunted Palace"—(which is perfection)—is seldom understood. The defects of his character and the errors of his conduct, moreover, were exaggerated in his own time, and they have been absurdly exploited in ours. He was a brilliant and an extraordinary man. The treasures of imaginative, creative, beautiful art, in prose as well as verse, that he contributed to American literature are permanent and precious; and nothing in literary biography is more contemptible than the disparagement of his memory that continually proceeds through its pages, on the score of his intemperance. Poe died in 1849, aged forty, leaving works that fill ten closely packed volumes. No man achieves a result like that whose brain is ruined by stimulants. The same disparagement has been diffused as to Fitz-James O'Brien, that fine poet and romancer, who died at thirty-four,—losing his life in the American Civil War,—whose writings I collected and published. I have known O'Brien to have neither

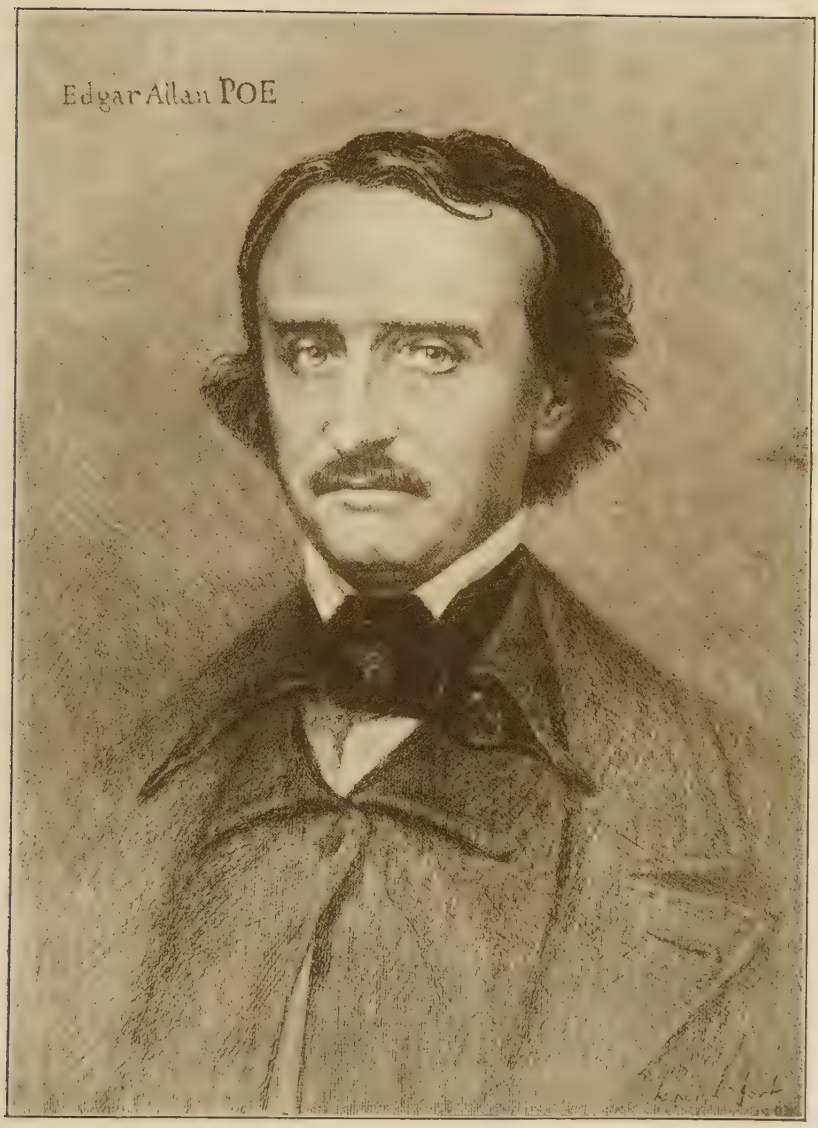
lodging, food nor money,—to be, in fact, destitute of everything except the garments in which he stood. The volume of his works that I collected,—including the remarkable stories of "The Diamond Lens" and "The Wondersmith,"—is one of five hundred pages; and there are other writings of his in my possession which would make another volume of equal size. He was an Irishman, and he knew and liked the favorite tipple of his native land; but it is to his genius that the world owes his writings,—not to his drams. Poe may have been afflicted with the infirmity of drink. My old friend John Brougham, the comedian, who knew him well, told me that Poe could not swallow even a single glass of wine without losing his head. But what does it signify, and why should a reader be perpetually told of it, whether he drank wine or not? His writings remain, and they are an honor to our literature; and that is all we need to consider. As Tennyson wrote:

> He gave the people of his best!
> His worst he kept: his best he gave.
> My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
> Who will not let his ashes rest.

The motive of the disparagement of Poe is envy. In an age of mediocrity inferior writers will always strive to degrade an exceptional genius. Shakespeare, who records everything, has happily recorded that. "He hath a daily beauty in his life that makes me ugly." "To some kind of men their virtues serve them but as enemies." "Will honor not live with the living? No. Detraction will not suffer it."

Among my valued relics is a piece of the coffin of Poe, taken from his grave when his remains were moved and reburied in Westminster churchyard, Baltimore, in October, 1875. He had lain in the earth for twenty-six years. That sombre memorial was sent to me by an old friend, John T. Ford, the once eminent theatrical manager, now dead and gone, and soon afterward I wrote, at his suggestion, and because of the effect of the relic, the poem that was read at the dedication of the monument marking the place of Poe's final burial.

I once had a conversation with Longfellow concerning Poe. It was on an evening when I was sitting with him, at his fireside, and when I



EDGAR ALLAN POE

From an Etching by Louis Lefort

chanced to observe a volume of Poe's poems on his library table. I inquired whether he had ever met Poe and was assured that he had not. Longfellow opened the book and read aloud a few stanzas of the poem "For Annie," remarking that one of them, containing the line "And the fever called living is over at last," would be an appropriate epitaph for its writer. There was not a shade of resentment in either his manner or voice. "My works," he said, "seemed to give Mr. Poe much trouble; but I am alive and still writing." I remember that he mused a little, in silence, and then began to speak of the inexpedience of replying to attacks made in the press. "You are at the beginning of your career," he added, "and I advise you never to answer the attacks that will be made on you." It was wise counsel. Only lately, reading in "Herman Boerhaave," I came upon a kindred thought: "Calumny and detraction are sparks, which, if you do not blow them, will go out of themselves." The persistent malevolence and misrepresentation with which Poe assailed the personal integrity and the writings of Longfellow might have been

expected to inspire the elder writer with a lasting animosity: his feeling and tone, on the contrary, when referring to the subject, were those of compassion and tolerance. He understood the "genus irritabile," and he had deep sympathy with it.

I met him one night at a hall in Boston, and sat with him, at his expressed wish, to listen to a lecture by Charles Mackay, on "Dibdin's Sea Songs." Mackay's verse is not generally read now, but it was popular once. He wrote it fluently and in abundance. One of his more ambitious fabrics relates to the "Tarantula Dance": there is a fable that a person bitten by that venomous spider becomes delirious and must dance downward toward the sea. His best-known poem begins with the familiar line, "There's a good time coming, boys." He was a compact, burly, ruddy-faced little man, and a commonplace, matter-of-fact speaker, sincere and sensible. He gave a plain narrative of Charles Dibdin's life and quoted several of the songs, notably "Tom Bowline"; and he closed the discourse by reading one of his own graceful poems of sentiment, which he said he had that

day written,—prompted thereto by the sight of some daisies growing on Boston Common. Longfellow proposed that we should walk home together, it being a pleasant, moonlit night, and that we did,—across the West Boston bridge, along the silent streets of the Port, over Dana Hill, past the red brick buildings of Harvard, and so onward to the gate of his mansion, in the Mount Auburn road, in old Cambridge, where we said good-night and parted. It is a long walk, but it seemed short to me; for the poet whom I so much loved and reverenced beguiled the time with pleasant talk about the sea and about old ballads, —particularly the Spanish ballads of Lockhart, —and, incidentally, about the delights and intrinsic rewards of poetry; and I recall it as one of the most delightful of rambles. Longfellow's voice was calm and sweet, and his companionship always caused peace. He spoke kindly of Charles Mackay's lecture; said that he had enjoyed it; and added that it was a spirit of comradeship that had led him to be present. "We must always do what we can," he said, "for our brother authors."

Mackay came again to America in the early

days of the Civil War, resided in Staten Island, near to New York, and acted as correspondent of "The London Times." Some readers, no doubt, are acquainted with his useful "Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions." He participated in the literary turmoil that ensued when Harriet Beecher Stowe stirred up the Byron scandal, and he wrote a book, now out of print, on Medora Leigh. He was the father of the late Eric Mackay, a man of poetic genius, dead in his prime, who wrote several excellent lyrics, and from whom much might have been expected.

It is not every poet who possesses the sense of humor. The lack of that sense in Wordsworth caused effects that are lamentable. Tennyson mistakenly considered himself to be strongly humorous, and when likened to Shelley he replied, almost resentfully, "But Shelley had no humor." Tennyson could be playful,—sometimes grimly and bitterly so, sometimes sweetly and merrily so,—but his humor was lambent. Longfellow's sense of humor, on the contrary, though gentle, was acute, and nothing comic escaped him. Among the relics that he especially

treasured was an inkstand once the property of Coleridge. One day, showing that relic to a stranger who had called on him, he said, "Perhaps 'The Ancient Mariner' was written from this." "Yes," said his visitor, "and 'The Old Oaken Bucket'—who *done* that?" Another visitor, on asking his age and being told it was seventy, remarked, "I've seen many men of your age who looked much younger than you do." A Newport bookseller said to him: "Why, you look more like a sea captain than a poet!" An admirer, of the epistolary order, wrote to him, saying: "Please send your autograph in your own handwriting." He has recorded a characteristic dialogue with a strange lady, in black garments, who accosted him one summer morning at his house door.

"Is this the house where Longfellow was born?"

"No, he was not born here."

"Did he die here?"

"No, he is not dead."

"Are you Longfellow?"

"I am."

"I thought you died two years ago."

That recalls the intelligent remark made to Walter Savage Landor by a lady who wished to compliment him on his "Pericles and Aspasia." "Mr. Landor," she said, "I haven't had time to read your 'Periwinkles and Asparagus,' but I hear it is very good."

Hero-worshippers sometimes act as well as speak in an eccentric manner. Looking from a front window of his dwelling, one day, Longfellow saw persons approaching across his lawn bearing a piano. The instrument was preceded by a lady who presently greeted him, saying that she had set one of his poems to music, and had now come to sing it to him; which she forthwith proceeded to do. He much enjoyed the humorous absurdity of such incidents, and he liked to recount them. I was seldom in his company without hearing from him a comic story or a sportive comment. He was a happy man, and he liked to diffuse cheerfulness and to make everybody happy around him. His usual aspect was that of sweet, gentle, pensive composure, but his mood was often playful, and his appreciative en-

joyment of anything humorous, while not demonstrative, was extreme. That enjoyment expressed itself in suppressed laughter and in a peculiar, low, delighted, caressing tone of voice. Speaking to me once about that admirable gentleman and rare poet, Thomas W. Parsons,—who wrote the noble Ode on Dante, which is one of the gems of our language,—he related, with peculiar zest, a comic incident of personal experience with him. Parsons was a man of fine genius and of a lovely spirit, and, as sometimes happens with such natures, he was easily confused by wine, to the use of which, when careworn, he sometimes resorted. "One summer evening," said Longfellow, "I found Parsons roaming in my garden. He did not know me at the moment, but he greeted me affably, and he accepted my invitation to take a drive. I ordered my carriage to be brought to the gate, and we drove together to his home. He had not recognized me, and during the whole of the ride he talked to me about the poetry of Longfellow, abusing it as extremely bad and inviting my concurrence in that opinion,—which, of course, I

gave. He was an amiable man and one of my cherished friends, and nothing could have been more ludicrous than both his discourse and the manner of it,—for he was sweetly confidential."

Stories of that kind Longfellow told with hearty relish. I recall his narration to me of the first interview that he had with Mrs. Cragie, when he called at her house, with the purpose of hiring a lodging in it. The prim, formal, dignified old lady showed him room after room.

"This is a pleasant room," he would say to her.

"Yes," she would answer. "This *is* a pleasant room,—but you cannot have it."

After that colloquy had been several times repeated the poet ventured to inquire:

"But, madam, *why* can I not have this room?"

"Well, sir, no *students* are allowed in this house."

"But I am *not* a student, Mrs. Cragie; I am only a *professor.*"

"Ah, that is different; you can have either of the rooms that you like."

"And so," he added, "I became a lodger in this house, which afterward became mine."

The disclosure would be remarkable and amusing if each author's private estimate of his contemporaries in authorship,—often his acquaintances or friends,—were to be obtained and made known. We know now what Lamb thought of Byron and what Coleridge thought of Moore, and some day, no doubt, when time enough has flown and memoirs have multiplied, the reader will learn what Bryant thought of Willis and what Stoddard thought of Holmes, and so following. It can scarcely fail to be a whimsical chronicle, for bards, as a class, are even more exigent than actors in their judgments of one another. Longfellow's nature was radically magnanimous. I never heard from his lips a syllable of detraction of any contemporary author. When he could not say praise he said nothing. The American authors whom, in my hearing, he specially extolled, were Dana, Washington Irving, Hawthorne, and Lowell. Of Allston, who was eight years his senior, and who died in 1843, he spoke with peculiar tenderness. "Allston," he said, describing him to me, "often dressed in white garments, from head to foot; he was serene

and benignant, his hair was silvery, his face was pale, and in white clothing he seemed like a man of snow." One of Longfellow's favorite anecdotes related to Allston, painter as well as poet, from whom, personally, he learned the incident. One of Allston's model sitters was an elderly Jew, and for some time the fastidious artist could not satisfy himself with the picture that he was endeavoring to paint. There came a moment at last, however, when the Jew's countenance assumed an expression of exultant animation and even of venerable majesty, and the painter was able to pursue his artistic purpose. "Your thought must have been on some fine subject," said Allston, speaking to his model; "what were you thinking of?"

"I was thinking," replied the candid Hebrew, "how much money you would get for that picture when it is finished."

Many years ago he told me, with an indescribably soft and rich tone of enjoyment in his voice, about a pedler who intruded himself into the house one morning, with a request for some verses in praise of a medicine that he was vending,—a

carminative, for infants,—offering a bottle of it, "price one dollar," in exchange for the lines. At another time he mentioned an amusing instance of the awkward compliment with which famous men are not infrequently favored. "A stranger," he said, "was introduced to me at Newport who, seizing my hand, most effusively exclaimed: 'Sir, I have long desired to know you. Sir, *I am one of the few men* who have read your 'Evangeline'!" And it is to himself that the lover of humor is indebted for record of the ingenuous remark made to him by an English woman who, with a party of fellow-travellers, called on the American poet: "As there are *no ruins* in this country," said the felicitous speaker, "we thought that we would come and see *you!*"

"I am sorry you are going away," Longfellow said to me, on a day in 1859, when I had come to his home to say farewell; "I wish that you could have stayed here." Had I been able to discern the future,—had I known what I was to encounter of toil and care in the literary life of New York,—I think that he would have had his wish. "In youth," says Sir Walter Scott,

"we seek pleasure, and in manhood fame and fortune and distinction, and when we feel the advance of years we would willingly compound for quiet and freedom from pain." Longfellow would gladly have used practical influence to induce me to remain in Cambridge. I recollect having had the wish to own and edit a newspaper which was published there and which happened to be for sale, and when I spoke to him on that subject he kindly offered to buy the paper for me if its owners would accept in payment a considerable number of shares of a certain stock that he possessed. The transaction might have been effected, and probably would have been, but that an esteemed city official chanced to interpose, with an offer that was more attractive, and so the project failed and the current of a lifetime was changed.

In the early days of my acquaintance with Longfellow I observed that he was inclined to bright apparel; not to the elaborate dandyism of his popular contemporary, N. P. Willis, and not to the extravagance of radiant raiment that characterized Charles Dickens in early life, but to

such decorative attire as the figured waistcoat and the gay cravat. His dress, however, was always in good taste. Indeed, there was about the whole man,—his person, his ways and his influence,—an air of exquisite refinement and tranquillity, the natural result of temperamental sweetness and perfect self-possession. He pursued his own course. He was a man to inspire resolute but calm devotion to a far-reaching, noble purpose, and thus he was a man to soothe and cheer. That way I love to remember him,—sitting beside his open fireplace, as he often did, late at night, after all his household had retired, watching the flames, listening to the wind in the chimney, musing, smoking his cigar, and occasionally writing whatever came into his thoughts.

In a number of "Notes and Queries" there was published a just, graceful and sympathetic tribute to the memory of Longfellow, by John C. Francis, who, in noting "the magnetism which drew all hearts toward him," mentioned that "Mrs. Carlyle remembered his visit to them, at Craigenputtock, as 'the visit of an angel,' and William Winter, who had been greeted by him as a young

aspirant in literature, would walk miles to Longfellow's house, only to put his hand upon the latch of the gate which the poet himself had touched." That act of homage on my part was done in my youth; but, old as I am, the feeling that prompted it has not yet died out of my heart. Such emotions commonly perish when time and experience have shown to us the frailties of human nature and the selfishness of the world: but if ever a man has lived whose excellence justified the continuance of them Longfellow was that man. His character, his life and his writings concur in the diffusion of such an influence and such an example as have helped thousands of human beings, and will help thousands of human beings hereafter, to meet trial and affliction with unswerving courage, and to bear with fortitude every ordainment of fate. The sudden and terrible calamity that well nigh broke his heart was endured without a murmur. The strifes and tumults of the sordid, seething world surged round him in vain. No obstacle of adversity every stayed him in the accomplishment of his sacred mission,—to bless mankind by

the interpretation of Nature's beauty and by the monition and enforcement of spiritual hope. His exemplar, I think, was Goethe, who, in one great dramatic poem, written without haste and without rest, achieved the consummate and final expression of human life,—perfect as a picture and supreme as a guide. It is a kindred achievement that makes the greatness of Longfellow. There is comfort in every page that he wrote, and in the last words that ever fell from his pen there is a precious legacy of faith: " 'Tis daybreak everywhere."

II.

BOHEMIAN DAYS.

The Boston of to-day presents a strong contrast with the Boston of fifty or sixty years ago. Now it is an Irish Roman Catholic city. Then it was an American Puritan city. Now it is spacious and splendid. Then it was comparatively small and staid. Now it is pervaded with commotion and the attendant racket. Then it was all tranquillity. Now it does not hold undisputed and indisputable pre-eminence in literature and journalism. Then it was,—and was rightly called,—the Athens of America. In those days I was familiar with every part of it. As a boy I dwelt and sported on old Fort Hill,—since reduced to a plain,—and made my playground all along the waterside, from Constitution Wharf to Charlestown Bridge. The Common; the Back Bay; the dry docks; the India Wharf warehouses, of which the doors often

stood open, liberating delicious, alluring odors of cinnamon and cedar; the T Wharf, with its story of Revolutionary times; the granite Custom House, then new, and seeming wonderful; the Quincy Market, then considered a marvel of architecture,—all those things, and many more, were known to me. Many a time did I gaze, awe-stricken, at the haunted mansion, deserted and silent, frowning behind its huge walls, in High street, called and known as "Harris's Folly." Many a time did I rove through Theatre Alley and look with juvenile curiosity on the theatre in Federal street,—little dreaming that the stage was to be a principal theme of my thoughts and writings, throughout a long, laborious life. From the top of Fort Hill there was, in the vicinity of Hamilton street, a mysterious winding stairway, of stone, down which the adventurous truant could make his way to the precincts of the docks, where much of my boyhood was spent, in consort with other vagrant lads; and many a happy hour did I pass there,—sometimes practically investigating newly landed cargoes of sugar; sometimes reclining on the sun-warmed

planks of the silent piers, and dreaming over the prospect of the moving ships and the distant islands of Boston harbor.

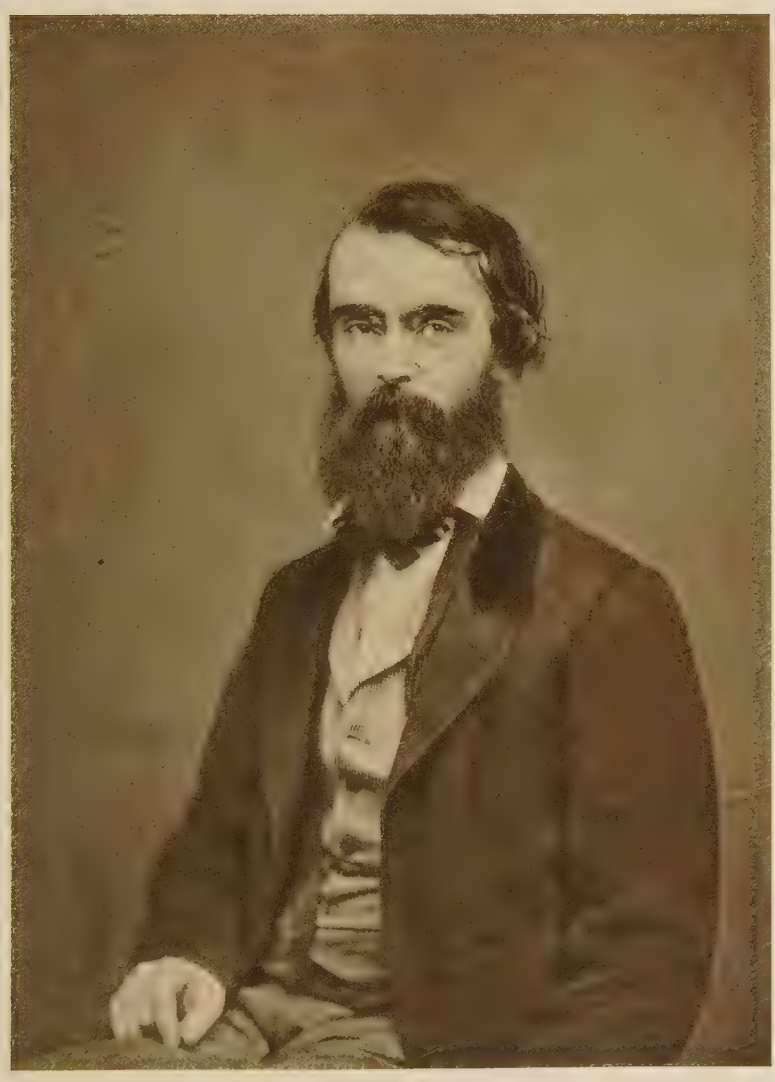
Those were the days in which I began to write what I thought was poetry; and soon, as years slipped away and golden youth arrived, I began to concern myself with the affairs of magazines and newspapers and the making of books. The publications of that period were singularly different from those of the present day. Charles G. Greene, facetious and satirical, was editing "The Post." George Lunt, scholarlike, trenchant and independent, was editing "The Courier," a conservative newspaper, of great dignity and force. The brilliant Charles T. Congdon, afterward so highly distinguished as an editorial writer for "The New-York Tribune," was adorning the columns of "The Atlas." Those were among the more important of the newspapers. Among the periodicals to which I obtained access were "The Transcript," "The Olive Branch," and "The Saturday Evening Gazette." "The Olive Branch" was, I think, edited by Louise Chandler, in after years highly distinguished as Louise Chandler

Moulton. "The Gazette" was edited by William Warland Clapp, author of that valuable book, "A Record of the Boston Stage," which contains a compact history of theatrical affairs in Boston, from 1849 to 1853: his assistant editors were Adam Wallace Thaxter and Benjamin P. Shillaber ("Mrs. Partington"),—both of them cherished friends of mine, to the end of their days. "The Atlantic Monthly," started in 1857, with Frank Underwood as editor, speedily led the field, in literary authority. The august luminaries of literature,—Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, Whittier, Whipple, etc.,—clustered around that magazine, and likewise around the old bookstore at the corner of Washington and School streets, in which the presiding genius was the handsome James T. Fields, then in the zenith of health, happiness and popularity. Epes Sargent, who wrote "A Life on the Ocean Wave,"—which the popular vocalist, Russell, always sang "A life on the ocean *sea*,"—was prominent then, and being a townsman of mine, as Whipple was (we were all natives of Gloucester), he was friendly toward me and propitious toward my

verse. A dapper, elegant little man he was, neatly attired, swinging a thin, polished black bamboo cane, and seeming the embodiment of cheer. Benjamin Muzzey was one of the leading publishers of that time, a fine, portly person, who brought forth several piratical editions of "Festus," and largely profited by them. Many years later (in 1897), at Nottingham, England, I had the honor to meet the author of that remarkable poem, Philip James Bailey, at his home; and I found it mortifying to hear him say that he had never received "even sixpence" from the sale of his book in America, although apprised that the sale there had been very large.

It would be easily possible to descant on the conditions of the "Modern Athens" of fifty years ago. I found them oppressive, and I was eager to make my escape from them,—as presently, after some experience as an author, a journalist, a political speaker, and a member of the Suffolk bar, I did.

When I made my home in New York, in the winter of 1859-'60, a circle of writers was



HENRY CLAPP, Jr.

existent there, called Bohemians. Those writers did not designate themselves by that name, but it had been applied to them by others, and it had grown to be their distinctive title. Some of those writers had already become personally known to me; all of them soon became my companions. I had not been many days in the city before I was engaged, by Henry Clapp, to be sub-editor of his paper, "The Saturday Press," a weekly publication that he had started in 1858, and that, all along, had led, and was still leading, a precarious existence; and with that paper I remained associated till its suspension, in December, 1860. The purpose of "The Saturday Press" was to speak the truth, and to speak it in a way that would amuse its readers and would cast ridicule upon as many as possible of the humbugs then extant and prosperous in literature and art. Clapp was an original character. We called him "The Oldest Man." His age was unknown to us. He seemed to be very old, but, as afterward I ascertained, he was then only forty-six. In appearance he was somewhat suggestive of the portrait of Voltaire. He was a man of

slight, seemingly fragile but really wiry figure; bearded; gray; with keen, light blue eyes, a haggard visage, a vivacious manner, and a thin, incisive voice. He spoke the French language with extraordinary fluency, and natives of France acknowledged that he spoke it with a perfect accent. He had long resided in Paris, and, indeed, in his temperament, his mental constitution, and his conduct of life, he was more a Frenchman than an American. At the time of our first meeting I knew little of his mercurial character and his vicissitudinous career, but with both of them I presently became acquainted. He was brilliant and buoyant in mind; impatient of the commonplace; intolerant of smug, ponderous, empty, obstructive respectability; prone to sarcasm; and he had for so long a time lived in a continuous, bitter conflict with conventionality that he had become reckless of public opinion. His delight was to shock the commonplace mind and to sting the hide of the Pharisee with the barb of satire. He had met with crosses, disappointment, and sorrow, and he was wayward and erratic; but he possessed both the faculty of taste

and the instinctive love of beauty, and, essentially, he was the apostle of the freedom of thought.

Clapp was born in the island of Nantucket, November 11, 1814. In early life he associated himself with the church, espoused, as a lecturer and writer, the cause of temperance, and actively labored for the anti-slavery movement in New England,—following the leadership of that foremost abolitionist, Nathaniel P. Rogers, of New Hampshire, a man of brilliant ability, now forgotten, to whom he was devotedly attached, and whose name, in later years, he often mentioned to me, and always with affectionate admiration. His early essays in journalism were made in New Bedford, and gradually he drifted into that profession. At one time he edited a newspaper in Lynn, Mass., and once he was arrested and put into prison there, for his audacity and severity in attacking the traffickers in spirituous liquor. His views, on almost all subjects, were of a radical kind, and, accordingly, he excited venomous antagonism. As to the philosophy of social life he was a disciple of François Charles

Fourier, in the translation of whose treatise on "The Social Destiny of Man" he had a principal hand, when working as secretary to Albert Brisbane. His career, when I was first associated with him, had been, in material results, more or less, a failure, as all careers are, or are likely to be, that inveterately run counter to the tide of mediocrity. Such as he was,—withered, bitter, grotesque, seemingly ancient, a good fighter, a kind heart,—he was the Prince of our Bohemian circle. His "Saturday Press," piquant, satirical, pugnacious, often fraught with quips and jibes relative to unworthy reputations of the hour, and, likewise, it must be admitted, sometimes relative to writers who merited more considerate treatment, eventually failed, but, during its brief existence, it was, in one way, a considerable power for good.

There always has been, in literary life, and notwithstanding the mental alertness and feverish activity of the present day there still is, a tendency to inertia and dry rot,—a tendency that shows itself in the gradual establishment of mediocrities as the shining exemplars of poetry

and the potential leaders of thought. Just as there are Figureheads now, so there were Figureheads then; and Clapp delighted in satire of them. Tupper was more popular than Tennyson, sixty years ago, and General George P. Morris was actually accepted as the American Tom Moore. Readers of "Faust" will recall Goethe's satirical comment on the breadth of the summit of Parnassus. The caustic "Saturday Press" found ample opportunity for satire, and the opportunity was improved,—with beneficial results; for, in the long run, it is ever a public advantage that the bubble of fictitious reputation should be punctured. A satirist, however, and especially one who writes "satire with no kindness in it," must expect to be disliked. "The Saturday Press" was discontinued after a currency of a little more than two years, and for some time after its decease Clapp wrote for "The New York Leader," a Democratic weekly, edited by John Clancy and Charles G. Halpine,—the latter widely known and much admired, in his day, as "Miles O'Reilly." That was in the war time. About 1866-'67 Clapp resuscitated his

weekly, in a new form, with the characteristic editorial announcement: "This paper was stopped in 1860, for want of means: it is now started again for the same reason." The quality of the man's wit is aptly shown in that example of it. His mind was ever ready with quips of that description. It was Clapp who described Horace Greeley (with whom he associated and was well acquainted when they happened to be in Paris at the same time) as "a self-made man that worships his creator"; and it was Clapp who said of a notoriously vain, self-satisfied clergyman, when asked if he knew what the Rev. ——— was doing: "He is waiting for a vacancy in the Trinity." Over his signature, "Figaro," the vivacious old Bohemian, for several years, writing about the Stage, afforded amusement to the town; but gradually he drifted into penury, and, although help was not denied to him, he died in destitution, April 2, 1875: and I remember that, after his death, his name was airily traduced by persons who had never manifested even a tithe of his ability or accomplished anything comparable with the service which, notwithstanding his faults and

errors, he had rendered to literature and art. His grave is in a little cemetery at Nantucket. His epitaph,—written by me, at the request of a few friends, but not approved by his only relative then living, and therefore not inscribed over his ashes, contains these lines:

Wit stops to grieve and Laughter stops to sigh
That so much wit and laughter e'er could die;
But Pity, conscious of its anguish past,
Is glad this tortur'd spirit rests at last.
His purpose, thought, and goodness ran to waste,
He made a happiness he could not taste:
Mirth could not help him, talent could not save:
Through cloud and storm he drifted to the grave.
Ah, give his memory,—who made the cheer,
And gave so many smiles,—a single tear!

Our place of meeting, in 1859-'60, was a restaurant, in a basement, on the west side of Broadway, a short distance north of Bleecker street, kept by a German named Pfaff. That genial being, long since gone the way of all mankind, had begun his business with a few kegs of beer and with the skill to make excellent coffee. Clapp, who subsisted chiefly on coffee and tobacco, had been so fortunate as to discover that place soon after it was opened. By him it was made known to others, and gradually it came to

be the haunt of writers and artists, mostly young, and, though usually impecunious, opulent in their youth, enthusiasm, and ardent belief alike in a rosy present and a golden future. The place was roughly furnished, containing a few chairs and tables, a counter, a row of shelves, a clock, and some barrels. At the east end of it, beneath the sidewalk of Broadway, there was a sort of cave, in which was a long table, and after Clapp had assumed the sceptre as Prince of Bohemia, that cave and that table were pre-empted by him and his votaries, at certain hours of the day and night, and no stranger ventured to intrude into the magic realm. Thither came George Arnold,—handsome, gay, breezy, good-natured,—one of the sweetest poets in our country who have sung the beauties of Nature and the tenderness of true love; and he never came without bringing sunshine. Walt Whitman was often there, clad in his eccentric garb of rough blue and gray fabric, —his hair and beard grizzled, his keen, steel-blue eyes gazing, with bland tolerance, on the frolicsome lads around him. Charles Dawson Shanly, —a charming essayist and a graceful poet, quaint

in character, sweet in temperament, modest and gentle in bearing,—was a regular visitor to the Bohemian table. N. G. Shepherd,—one of the most picturesque of human beings, a man of genius, whose poems, never yet collected, ought to be better known than they now are,—was seldom absent from the evening repast, a festivity in which, contrary to general belief, the frugality of poverty was ever more clearly exhibited than the luxury of riches or the prodigality of revel. That singular being, Charles D. Gardette, who wrote "The Fire Fiend," and, for a time, rejoiced in luring the public into a belief that it was a posthumous poem by Edgar Poe, was conspicuous there, for daintiness of person, elegance of attire, and blithe animal spirits. Frank Wood and Henry Neil, young journalists of fine ability, were frequently present: both of them died in youth, with their promise unfulfilled. The most fashionable visitor was Edward G. P. Wilkins, then dramatic critic for "The New York Herald"; a prime favorite with the elder James Gordon Bennett; remarkable for extraordinary facility in literary composition, for gentle,

playful humor, for intimate knowledge and keen observation of human nature, and for a quizzical manner, bland and suave, but suggestive of arch, mischievous, veiled pleasantry. Wilkins was singularly self-contained, yet it was not difficult, when in his company, to feel that his secret thought was one of satirical banter. Among the artists who came to Pfaff's were Launt Thompson, George Boughton, Edward F. Mullen, and Sol Eytinge, jr.,—he whom Charles Dickens declared to have made the best illustrations for his novels and the best portrait of himself. The most striking figure of the group was Fitz-James O'Brien.

When Clapp started "The Saturday Press,"—which he did in association with Edward Howland, October 29, 1858,—he engaged T. B. Aldrich to write book reviews and Fitz-James O'Brien to write about the Stage. Neither of those writers long remained in harness. Aldrich had more congenial opportunities, while O'Brien was a man to whom the curb of regular employment was intolerable. Aldrich was associated with the paper during only the first three months

of its existence; O'Brien for only a few weeks. Among those Bohemian comrades of mine,—all dead and gone now and mostly forgotten,—O'Brien was at once the most potential genius and the most original character. As I think of him I recall Byron's expressive figure, "a wild bird and a wanderer." Readers of the present day are, probably, not familiar with the stories of "The Diamond Lens" and "The Wondersmith," written by O'Brien and published in early numbers of "The Atlantic Monthly." Those stories were hailed as the most ingenious fabrics of fiction that had been contributed to our literature since the day when Edgar Poe surprised and charmed the reading community with his imaginative, enthralling tale of "The Fall of the House of Usher." They revived, indeed, the fashion of the weird short story, and they provided a model for subsequent compositions of that order. A groundless, foolish fable was set afloat, soon after the publication of "The Diamond Lens," to the effect that O'Brien had derived it from one of the manuscripts of William North,—the fact being that it

was prompted by a remark made to him by Dr. A. L. Carroll (he who, for a short time, in 1865, published the comic paper called "Mrs. Grundy"), relative to the marvellous things contained in a drop of water. North, who wrote the novel called "The Man of the World,"— at first named "The Slave of the Lamp,"—was a comrade of O'Brien's, but they quarrelled, and in that novel North described and satirized his former friend, under the name of "Fitz-Gammon O'Bouncer." North committed suicide, November 13, 1854, at No. 7 Bond Street, New York, by drinking prussic acid,—disappointment in love, and in everything else, being the cause of his deplorable act. He was about twenty-eight years of age; a native of England; a scion of the Guilford family; and, both in London and New York, he had worked incessantly with his pen,—writing stories in such magazines as the old "Graham's" and "The Knickerbocker," and contributing in various ways to the press. An envelope was found on his desk, containing twelve cents, with a few written words, stating that to be the fruit of his life's labor.

It was not to William North, however, or to anybody else, that Fitz-James O'Brien was indebted for the inspiration of his writings. Some of them were produced under my personal observation. Others were made known to me immediately after they had been composed. His fine poem of "The Fallen Star" was written in my lodging, and I still preserve the first draft of it, which Fitz left on my table, together with the pen with which he wrote it. His singular story of "The Wondersmith" grew out of an anecdote related by Clapp, in my presence. "Once, while I was working for Albert Brisbane" (so, in substance, said the old Prince of our Bohemia), "I had to read to him, one evening, many pages of a translation that I had made, for his use, of Fourier's book on the Social Destiny of Man. He was closely attentive and seemed to be deeply interested; but, after a time, I heard a slight snore, and looking at him, in profile, I saw that he was sound asleep—and yet the eye that I could see *was wide open.* Then and thus I ascertained, somewhat to my surprise, that he had a glass eye." There was some talk,

ensuing, about the use of glass eyes and about the startling effects producible by the wearer of such an optic who should suddenly remove it from his visage, polish it, and replace it. In his story of "The Wondersmith" O'Brien causes the uncanny keeper of the toys to place his glass eye, as a watcher,—investing that orb with the faculty of sight and the means of communication.

At twilight on a gloomy autumn day in 1860, when I happened to be sitting alone at the long table under the sidewalk in Pfaff's Cave, O'Brien came into that place and took a seat near to me. His face was pale and careworn and his expression preoccupied and dejected. He was, at first, silent; but presently he inquired whether I intended to go to my lodging, saying that he would like to go there with me, and to write something that he had in mind. I knew O'Brien and, thoroughly understanding his ways, I comprehended at once the dilemma in which he was placed. Our circle of boys had a name for it. He was "on a rock"; that is to say, he was destitute. I told him that I had something to do, that would keep me absent for an hour, at the end of which

time I would return for him. That was a pretext for going to my abode (it was in Varick Street), and causing a room to be prepared for my friend. He remained in that lodging for two nights and a day. In the course of that time he slept only about four hours: I could not induce him to taste either food or drink: he would not even eat a little fruit that I obtained and contrived to leave in his way. On the morning of the second day he appeared at my bedside, having a roll of manuscript in his hand, and, formally, even frigidly, took leave of me. "Sir," he said, "I wish you good morning"; and, so saying, he departed. About four o'clock in the afternoon of that day I entered Delmonico's, then at the corner of Broadway and Chambers Street, and there I found Fitz,—in glory. He was arrayed in new garments; he had refreshed himself; he was dispensing refreshment to all who would partake of it; his aspect was that of wealth and joy. He had, in the meantime, sold to "Harper's Magazine," for a large price (at least in those days it was considered large), the product of his vigil at my lodging, and he was rejoicing

in the sensation of affluence. He was a strange being: I remember that he became angry because I would not borrow some money from him, and at last I was obliged to appease him by accepting the loan of a small banknote. The composition that he had sold was his fabric of narrative verse called "The Sewing Bird,"—a singularly ingenious work, blending fancy with satire, which had been suggested to him by the sight of one of those little silver-colored birds, then a recent invention, used by sewing girls, to hold cloth. The drift of it is that much of the remunerative work that should be left for women to do is pre-empted and taken from them by men. It meant more at that time, perhaps, than it does now. It was widely read and much admired. The wish that every remunerative work to which women are equal should be reserved for them is, no doubt, general; but there is a ludicrous side to the subject, as noticed by that great novelist Wilkie Collins, who, in one of his delightful stories, refers to " . . . Maternal societies for confining poor women; Magdalen societies for rescuing poor women; Strong-Minded societies for put-

ting poor women into poor men's places and leaving the poor men to shift for themselves." Still, "The Sewing Bird" is a clever work, and it had a good effect.

Like many persons of the Irish race, O'Brien was impetuous in temper and "sudden and quick in quarrel." At one time he consorted with a Scotch comrade, Donald McLeod, author of a novel called "Pynnshurst," and they were obliged to occupy the same bed. Once, after they had retired for slumber, an angry dispute occurred between them, relative to the question of Irish or Scotch racial superiority. O'Brien was aggressively positive as to the predominant merit of the Irish. McLeod was violent in assertion of the incomparable excellence of the Scotch. "I will not tolerate your insolence," said McLeod. "You can do as you please," said O'Brien. "I will demand satisfaction!" shouted McLeod; "a friend of mine shall wait on you in the morning." "Very well," answered O'Brien, at the same time pulling the blanket over himself, "you know where to find me, in the morning!" Both the belligerents were sincere in their ferocious inten-

tion, but neither of them could resist the suddenly comic aspect of their dispute, and so the quarrel ended in a laugh. The incident was related by O'Brien.

The following letter, characteristic of O'Brien, and genially expressive of his peculiar humor, was addressed by him to an old friend, the admirable, once eminent, comedian John E. Owens (1823-'86), the most essentially humorous actor that has adorned our stage since the time of Burton:

November 21, 1860.

Is your name Owens? This is a query which I wish to have distinctly answered. I remember, on a recent occasion, meeting a person whose mental attractions were only equalled by the beauty of his physical development. That person answered to the name above mentioned. As I learn that an individual bearing the same cognomen is now managing an insignificant theatre in New Orleans, I address this epistle to that place, in the hope of discovering whether the Knight errant Owens and the manager Owens are one and indivisible—which it seems the Union is not. Independent of the personal interest which I feel in ascertaining the welfare and locality of my New York friend, I have a small interest in a comedy of surpassing beauty which he bore away with him from this city, as Jason bore the golden fleece from Colchis. You see this matter is ad-Jasoned to the other. Now, if you are the lovely and fascinating Owens

that whilom I knew, I wish you to tell me whether you will take the comedy on the terms named, or any other man? If you take it, please get it copied, and charge me, out of the first instalment, with copying charges as well as with a certain ten dollars, money lent, and forward balance. If not let me have a line, and I will enclose the last mentioned filthy lucre, and forward at same time express expenses for the transmission of the MS. here. I have no other copy of the gorgeous production, and do not want to lose the chances of getting it done here. Please reply at once. If your name IS Owens, I may tell you without breach of confidence that all our friends are well. Tom Placide has multiplied into ten acts instead of his usual five. Wilkins has lately been convicted of a deaf-alcation. Cushman, thank God! is going, and Booth is come. Presenting with all due incoherence the assurance of my distinguished consideration, I remain (if your name IS Owens), your sincere friend,

F. J. O'BRIEN.

Address, Harper Brothers, Franklin Square, New York.

O'Brien's career was brief, stormy, laborious, sometimes gay, sometimes miserable, and its close, though honorable, was sad. He was a native of Limerick, born about 1828. He was graduated from Dublin University, and after leaving that institution he settled in London and edited a paper there, which failed. In 1852 he came to New York, bringing to such prominent editors as Major Noah and General Morris let-

ters of introduction from Dr. R. Shelton Mackensie, then resident in Liverpool, later eminent in the journalism of Philadelphia. On his arrival in America O'Brien entered with vigor upon the duties of the literary vocation, writing for "The Home Journal," "The Evening Post," "The New York Times," "The Whig Review," "Harper's Magazine," and other publications, and sometimes contributing short plays to the New York stage: the elder Wallack and Lester Wallack were among his friends. "When I first knew O'Brien," so wrote Aldrich, in a letter to me, "he was trimming the wick of 'The Lantern,' which went out shortly afterward." "The Lantern" was a paper that had been started by John Brougham, the comedian. The best of O'Brien's works were first published in "Putnam's Magazine," "Harper's" and "The Atlantic." The last article that came from his pen was printed in "Vanity Fair," a comic paper that struggled through much vicissitude, during the war time, and, though its payments were small, was of vital service to our Bohemian circle. When the war began O'Brien promptly sought service in the field,

at first with the New York Seventh Regiment, later with the forces led by General Lander: on whose staff he held the position of a Volunteer Aid. On February 6, 1862, in a fight with the cavalry of the Confederate Colonel Ashley, he was dangerously wounded, the shoulder-joint of his left arm being smashed into fragments. On April 6, at Cumberland, Virginia, he died, of that wound. Aldrich and O'Brien had applied, almost simultaneously, for the place of Aid to General Lander, and a letter giving the appointment had been addressed to Aldrich, at Portsmouth, but, by accident, it failed to reach him, as he had left that place, and so the coveted position fell to O'Brien. One of Henry Clapp's grim witticisms glanced at that subject: "Aldrich, I see," he said, "has been shot in O'Brien's shoulder." The old cynic did not like either of them. As to O'Brien, friendship had to be charitable toward infirmities of character and errors of conduct. He lacked both moral courage and intellectual restraint. He was wayward, choleric, defiant, sometimes almost savage: but he was generous in disposition and capable of heroism,

and his works afford abundant evidence of the imagination that accompanies genius and the grace that authenticates literary art. Among my Bohemian comrades he was not the most beloved, but he had the right to be the most admired. His poem of "The Fallen Star," already mentioned, contains stanzas in which, unconsciously, he revealed the better part of his own nature, with some part of his own experience, and which pathetically indicate the writer's personality and the influence it diffused:

A brilliant boy that I once knew,
In far-off, happy days of old,
With sweet frank face and eyes of blue
And hair that shone like gold;

A figure sinewy, lithe and strong,
A laugh infectious in its glee,
A voice as beautiful as song
When heard along the sea.

Like fruit upon a southern slope,
He ripened on all natural food,—
The winds that thrill the skyey cope,
The sunlight's golden blood;

And in his talk I oft discerned
A timid music vaguely heard,
The fragments of a song scarce learned,
The essays of a bird.

III.

VAGRANT COMRADES.

It was my fortune, when I was a student at the Dane Law School of Harvard College, to win the favorable notice of that honored Professor, Theophilus Parsons, and to be treated very kindly by him. On one occasion, after his morning lecture had ended, he called me into his study and imparted to me some serious advice. "I am sorry," he said, "to observe that you are turning your attention to Literature. I have seen your poems in the newspapers. Don't think of living by your pen. Stick to the Law! You will be an excellent lawyer. You will have a *profession* to depend on. You can make your way. You can have home and friends. Stick to the Law. I once knew a brilliant young man—Paine was his name—who started much as you have done. He might have had a prosperous and happy life. He had much ability. But he left the Law. He took to writing. They had

him here and there and everywhere, with his poems. He was convivial: he wasted his talents; and he sank into an early and rather a dishonored grave. Don't make a mistake at the beginning. Stick to the Law, and the Law will reward you."

So spoke my sage and friendly old preceptor, tersely and comprehensively stating the safe, conservative, prudential view of the literary vocation. There has, at all times, been some reason for that view. Macaulay said, of Richardson, the novelist, "he kept his shop and his shop kept him." "Let your pen be your pastime," said Sir Walter Scott, "your profession your sheet anchor." At the time when Professor Parsons imparted to me that earnest admonition to shun the Muses the reasons for it seemed decisive. The conditions of the literary life in America, certainly, were not propitious. The really vital literary movement in our country had, indeed, begun; but that fact was not sharply realized. The number of writers who were obtaining a subsistence from distinctively literary labor was small. Dana was a man of fortune. Halleck

was an accountant. Bryant was an editor. Longfellow was a college professor. Hawthorne was an official in the Federal service. Charles Sprague was a banker. Holmes was a physician. Prosperity such as attended "The Lamplighter," by Miss Cummings, and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Mrs. Stowe (I remember seeing boys, with baskets full of copies of the latter novel, running in the streets and selling them, as pedlers sell apples), was extraordinarily exceptional. Poe, notwithstanding his marvellous genius,—or because of it,—had lived in comparative poverty and died in destitution. The number of writers had considerably increased since the epoch of Washington Irving, and increase in number of writers had not been attended with increase of emolument from writing. "You young fellows," said that author, addressing George William Curtis, "are not so lucky as I was, for when *I* began to write there were only a few of us." The payment for literary product fifty years ago, unless in exceptional cases, was very small. A precarious vocation! there could be no doubt about it.

Experience was to teach me what counsel failed to teach. A harder time for writers has not been known in our country than the time that immediately preceded the outbreak of the Civil War; yet that was a time when the sun shone bright on the fields of Bohemia, and the roses were in bloom: a time of frequent hardship, sometimes of actual want: I learned then what it is to lack a lodging, and how it feels to be compelled to walk all night in the streets of a great city, alone, hungry and cold: not a time of continuous, unalloyed comfort, and yet almost always a time of careless mirth. It did not last long. By the stroke of death and the vicissitude of fortune the circle of my early artistic association in New York was broken in 1861, after which year our favorite haunt, Pfaff's Cave, was gradually deserted by the votaries of the quill and the brush, and the day of dreams was ended. Writing to me, in 1880, the poet Aldrich said: "How they have all gone, 'the old familiar faces'! What a crowd of ghosts people that narrow strip of old Bohemian country through which we passed long ago!" Even then, at the distance of

only twenty years, that period of freedom and frolic seemed vague and shadowy. Now, at the distance of half a century, it seems, in the dim vista of the Past, like a phantom that wavers in a dream. Not one of my old comrades of 1859-'60 is living now, and, for the most part, the mention of their names would mean nothing to the present generation of readers. Yet it is a fact within the experience of every close observer of his time that men and women of extraordinary ability and charm pass across the scene and vanish from it, leaving a potent impression of character, of mind, and even of genius, yet leaving no endurable evidence of their exceptional worth. Such persons, of whom the world hears nothing, are, sometimes, more interesting than some persons,—writers and the like,—of whom the world hears much. They deserve commemoration; occasionally they receive it. Browning's poem of "Waring" has done more to preserve the interesting memory of Alfred Dommett than anything has done that Dommett wrote: Matthew Arnold's poem of "Oberman" has cast a halo around the name of Senancour.

Prominent in the singular group of writers with whom I became associated in 1859-'60 was Edward G. P. Wilkins, the journalist, whom I have already mentioned, a man of brilliant talent and singular charm. He was a native of Boston, and his early experience of journalism was gained in that city. When I met him he was associated with "The New York Herald." He had attracted the attention of the elder James Gordon Bennett by writing an excellent account of the Crystal Palace exhibition (the building stood where Bryant Park now is, at the corner of Sixth Avenue and 42d Street, New York), and that sagacious editor had rapidly advanced him. He was an editorial writer, and also he held the office of musical and dramatic critic. He was a fluent penman, direct, explicit, humorous, ready with a reason for every opinion that he pronounced, and fortunate in the possession of an equable temper and a refined taste. His favorite author was Montaigne, whose works he read in the original French as well as in the English translation, and he was deeply sympathetic with

EDWARD G. P. WILKINS

Photograph by J. Gurney & Son, N. Y.

the later poems of Whittier: facts worth noting, because every man is perceived, at least in part, by knowledge of his loves in literature as well as by knowledge of his friends. He was a tall, slender man, of delicate constitution, having regular features, dark hair, and remarkably fine blue eyes. He stooped a little, and he was slightly deaf. His deafness, I observed, became peculiarly dense on occasions when he did not wish to hear. Noisy, intrusive persons, angry theatrical managers, and other belligerent individuals, when stating their grievances and making their complaints to him, were favored with courteous attention; but, with an extreme placidity of demeanor, he would request a second or a third recital of their remarks, and often then would misunderstand them. His tact in discomfiting a bully or quelling the clamor of a fool was extraordinary. He was scrupulously elegant in attire and carelessly so in manner, and his imperturbable, humorous affability was especially attractive. For the discreet management of his talents and professional opportunities, as well as for the polish of his manners, he was some-

what indebted to the friendship of Mme. Cora de Wilhorst, a popular vocalist of the period (she was the daughter of Reuben Withers, of New York, and it is recorded of her that she made a brilliant first appearance in opera, January 28, 1857, at the Academy of Music, as *Lucia*), therein being fortunate; because no influence can be more auspicious for any clever youth than that of an accomplished woman, acquainted with the ways of the social world and sincerely desirous of promoting his welfare.

Wilkins dwelt in a house, still standing, at the northeast corner of Amity and Greene streets, and there he died, in the spring of 1861. On the night but one before his death I sat by his bedside, from sunset till morning, and I had reason then to know that, beneath a blandly cynical exterior, his mind was reverent, his spirit gentle, and his heart affectionate. His disease was pneumonia, and he suffered much. It is hard to look upon anguish that you cannot relieve. Once, in the course of that dreadful night, he asked me to read to him,—at first a descriptive passage from Carlyle; then from the Bible. He

knew (though I did not) that his last hour was near. A cold, heavy, desolate rain was falling when I left him, which lasted all that day, but the next morning was beautifully clear and bright. I thought that I should find him better, but when, unaware of what had happened, I entered his chamber, all things were in order, and he was dead. His grave is in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Is there any reason why readers of the present day should care to hear of him? I think there is. He was the first among American journalists to introduce into our press the French custom of the Dramatic Feuilleton. Many writers of this period are,—without being aware of it,—following an example that was set by him; writing about the stage and society in a facetious, satirical vein, striving to lighten heavy or barren themes with playful banter, and to gild the dreariness of criticism with the glitter of wit. Wilkins not only attempted that task, but he accomplished it. His writings are buried in the files of "The Herald," "The Saturday Press" and "The Leader," and they are buried forever. His comedy called "Young New York"

survives. Laura Keene produced it, in the autumn of 1856, and herself acted in it, as also did George Jordan, Charles Wheatleigh, and Tom Johnston, three of the most expert comedians that have adorned the theatre in our time. Wilkins had a hand in other dramatic compositions, and he was instrumental in bringing upon our stage the first version that was acted in America of "Les Pattes des Mouche," the most charming of Sardou's comedies,—originally produced by Wallack, under the name of "Henriette"; now widely known and popular as "A Scrap of Paper." He did not habitually frequent Pfaff's Cave, but he often came there, and his presence afforded a signal contrast with that of some of our companions.

The group, seldom complete, included Clapp, Howland, Wilkins, O'Brien, George Arnold, Frank Wood, Charles Dawson Shanly, N. G. Shepherd, Charles D. Gardette, Walt Whitman, Thomas Blades de Walden, W. L. Symonds, T. B. Aldrich, Edward Mullen, and the writer of these words. Once in a while, at night, the table became surrounded. One such occasion I

recall when the humorist "Artemus Ward" (Charles F. Browne) made his first appearance there, accompanied by an acquaintance whose name he mentioned, and whom, with reassuring words, he gleefully commanded to take a seat. "Don't be afraid," he said: "they won't hurt you. These are Bohemians. A Bohemian is an educated hoss-thief!" On another such occasion, Mr. W. D. Howells, now the voluminous and celebrated novelist,—he whose effulgent criticism has, to the consternation of the literary world, dimmed the shining stars of Scott and Thackeray,—came into the cave, especially, as afterward was divulged, for the purpose of adoring the illustrious Whitman. Mr. Howells, at that time, was a respectable youth, in black raiment, who had only just entered on the path to glory, while Whitman, by reason of that odoriferous classic, the "Leaves of Grass," was in possession of the local Parnassus. The meeting, of course, was impressive. Walt, at that time, affected the Pompadour style of shirt and jacket, —making no secret of his brawny anatomy,— and his hirsute chest and complacent visage

were, as usual, on liberal exhibition: and he tippled a little brandy and water and received his admirer's homage with characteristic benignity. There is nothing like genius—unless possibly it may be leather.

I have seen a singular reference to that momentous occasion, written and published, in later years, by the renowned Mr. Howells. "At one moment of the orgy" (so runs that reference), "which went but slowly for an orgy, we were joined by some belated Bohemians, whom the others made a great clamor over. I was given to understand they were just recovered from a fearful debauch; their locks were still damp from the towels used to restore them, and their eyes were very frenzied. I was presented to those types, who neither said nor did anything worthy of their awful appearance, but dropped into seats at the table and ate of the supper with an appetite that seemed poor. I stayed, hoping vainly for worse things, until eleven o'clock, and then I rose and took my leave of a literary condition that had distinctly disappointed me."

The fine fancy and fertile invention that have

made Mr. Howells everywhere illustrious were never better exemplified than in these remarkable words; for, as a matter of fact, no such incidents occurred, either then or at any other time, nor did the great novelist ever see them, except in his "mind's eye." Fancy is both a wonderful faculty for a writer of fiction and a sweet boon for the reader of it. I have regretted the absence of Mr. Howells from a casual festival which occurred in Pfaff's Cave, much about the time of his advent there, when the lads (those tremendous revellers!) drank each a glass of beer in honor of the birthday of Henry Clapp, and when he might, for once, have felt the ravishing charm of Walt Whitman's colossal eloquence. It fell to the lot of that Great Bard, I remember, to propose the health of the Prince of Bohemia, which he did in the following marvellous words: "That's *the feller!*" It was my privilege to hear that thrilling deliverance, and to admire and applaud that superb orator. Such amazing emanations of intellect seldom occur, and it seems indeed a pity that this one should not have had Mr. Howells to embroider it with his ingenious

fancy and embalm it in the amber of his veracious rhetoric. Sad to relate, he was not present; and, equally sad to relate, the "types" whom he met at Pfaff's Cave, and with whom he was "distinctly disappointed," were quite as "distinctly disappointed" with him. They thought him a prig.

The custom of detraction, which has been exceedingly prevalent in American criticism from the time of the hounds that barked upon the track of Edgar Poe, is not only pernicious but ridiculous, and it is right and desirable that protest should be made against it. The men of whom I am writing had faults, no doubt, and many of them: all the angels, of course, lived in Boston, at that time, and were marshalled, by Frank Underwood, around "The Atlantic Monthly": but those old comrades of mine were not sots, nor were they given to "debauchery." Most of them were poor, and they were poorly paid. As an example, I will mention that for my poem of "After All," which has since found its way into almost every compilation of verse made within the last fifty years, I received three

dollars—and was glad to receive so much. Revelry requires money: and at the time Mr. Howells met those Bohemians,—with the "damp locks" and the "frenzied eyes,"—it is probable that the group did not possess enough money among them all to buy a quart bottle of champagne. Furthermore, they were writers of remarkable ability, and they were under the stringent necessity of working continually and very hard: and it seems pertinent to suggest that such a poem, for instance, as George Arnold's "Old Pedagogue," or Fitz-James O'Brien's Ode in commemoration of Kane, or Charles Dawson Shanly's "Walker of the Snow," is not to be produced from the stimulation of alcohol. Literature is a matter of brains, not drugs. It would be equally just and sensible for American criticism to cherish American literature, and to cease from carping about the infirmities, whether actual or putative, of persons dead and gone, who can no longer defend themselves.

It would be idle to allege that complete harmony existed among those vagrant comrades of mine,—for complete harmony among votaries of

any form of art has never yet existed, and, indeed, it is impossible. Nevertheless there was a sentiment of fraternity among those Bohemian writers, such as I have not since observed. George Arnold was the most entirely beloved member of that group. His manly character, his careless good-humor, his blithe temperament, his personal beauty, and his winning manners made him attractive to everybody. His numerous stories have not been collected, but his poems (gathered and published under my editorial care) survive, and their fluent, melodious blending of rueful mirth and tender feeling with lovely tints of natural description,—constituting an irresistible charm,—have commended them to a wide circle of readers. One of the saddest days of my life was the day when we laid him in his grave, in Greenwood. Another much loved companion was Shanly,—of whose writings scarce any record exists,—modest, silent, patient, reticent—everything that is meant by the name of gentleman. His poems called "The Briar-Wood Pipe" and "Rifleman, Shoot Me a Fancy Shot" ought long to preserve his memory, and perhaps they

GEORGE ARNOLD

will. To him it was a matter of indifference. I have never known a writer who was so absolutely careless of literary reputation: indeed, it was not until after we had been acquainted for several months that I learned that he had written anything. He never spoke to me of his writings, till, at the last, when, in 1875, he was leaving New York for Florida (where he died, April 14, that year), he asked me to act as his literary executor, in case any publisher should care to put forth a book of them. The contrasts of personality thus exhibited were full of interest. Perhaps the most abrupt of them was that afforded by the restful, indolent, elegant demeanor of Wilkins and the vital, breezy, exuberant demeanor of Fitz-James O'Brien,—the most representative Bohemian writer whom it has been my fortune to know.

John Brougham, the comedian, expressed to me the opinion that O'Brien never cared much for any person with whom he did not quarrel, and as both of them were Irishmen that opinion, perhaps, was correct. O'Brien sometimes involved himself, or became involved, in quarrels,

proceeding to physical violence. Persons whom he disliked he would not recognize, and in the expression of opinion, especially as to questions of literary art, he was explicit. Candor of judgment, indeed, relative to literary product was the inveterate custom of that Bohemian group. Unmerciful chaff pursued the perpetrator of any piece of writing that impressed those persons as trite, conventional, artificial, laboriously solemn, or insincere; and they never spared each other from the barb of ridicule. It was a salutary experience for young writers, because it habituated them to the custom not only of speaking the truth, as they understood it, about the writings of their associates, but of hearing the truth, as others understood it, about their own productions. "I greatly like your poem of 'Orgia,' " O'Brien said to me, "and I like it all the more because I did not think you could write anything so good."

The quarrels in which O'Brien participated were more often pugilistic than literary; contests into which he plunged, with Celtic delight in the tempest of combat. He was constitutionally val-

orous, but, as his valor lacked discretion and he did not hesitate to engage with giants, he was usually defeated. He came into the cave late one night, I remember, adorned with a black eye, which had been bestowed upon him by a casual antagonist in Broadway, because of a difference of opinion respecting the right of passage on the side-walk; and, producing from one pocket a vial with a leech in it, which,—concealed in a white handkerchief,—he applied to the region of his damaged optic, he produced from another pocket the manuscript of a poem that he said he had that evening written (his residence, then, was the old Hone House), called "The Lost Steamship"; and he read that poem to our circle in a magnificent manner, with all the passionate vigor, all the weird feeling, and all the tremor of haunted imagination that its tragical theme requires.

A steamship had recently been wrecked, on the Atlantic coast, with much loss of life. The poem is the story of the disaster, and that story is told, to a fisherman on the shore, by a person who seems, at first, to be the only survivor of the

wreck. That speaker declares that all on board the ship were drowned,—the last man to go down with her being the Second Mate: then, suddenly, he stands revealed as the ghost of the mariner, the final victim engulfed by the sea. I have heard many readings: I have never heard one in which afflicting reality, hysterical excitement, shuddering dread, and tremulous pathos were so strangely blended as they were in O'Brien's reading of his "Lost Steamship."

Poor O'Brien's combats were, no doubt, serious enough to him, but to most of his associates they seemed comic. His Waterloo, as a fistic belligerent,—a defeat which befell on June 14, 1858, at the New York Hotel,—was, as to some of its results, playfully indicated to me by the surgeon who attended the damaged warrior immediately after the battle. "He looked" (so wrote that humorous friend) "like Cruikshank's picture of 'the man wot wun the fight.' Never have I seen the human nose more completely comminuted than in my patient's case. Even his tailor wouldn't have recognized him. I remember that nose particularly, on account of his

LIBRARY,
R. I.

urgent solicitude that I should make it slightly aquiline, but avoid the Israelitish extreme. *Romans* rather than *Hebrews* furnished his text."

O'Brien is here portrayed as he was after his incorrigible, gypsy-like wildness of temperament had asserted absolute control over his conduct. He had not always been reckless; he had not always been environed with difficulties. The beginning of his literary career, as proved by the number and variety of his contributions to New York magazines and papers, was signalized by steadily ambitious effort and fertile industry—not wholly unrewarded. The poet George Arnold, who met him before I did, wrote: "When I first knew O'Brien, in 1856-'57, he had elegant rooms; a large and valuable library; piles of manuscripts; dressing-cases; pictures; a ward-robe of much splendor; and all sorts of knick-knackery, such as young bachelors love to collect." Other persons, since dead, who knew him soon after his arrival in New York, in 1852, have described him to me as a man of uncommonly attractive aspect,—making mention of his

athletic figure, genial face, fair complexion, pleasing smile, waving brown hair, and winning demeanor. When I first met him a change had occurred, alike in his person and his circumstances. He had come to Boston, as an assistant to that energetic, resolute, intrepid, tumultuous theatrical manager H. L. Bateman (the H. L. signifying Hezekiah Linthicum), who was then directing the professional tour of the beautiful actress Matilda Heron,—afterward the wife of the accomplished musician Robert Stoepel,—and it was easy to perceive that he had experienced considerable vicissitude and was a confirmed literary gypsy. His countenance bore a slight trace of rough usage; his hair, closely cropped, had begun to be a little thin; but his expressive gray-blue eyes were clear and brilliant; his laughter was bluff and breezy; his voice was strong and musical; his manner was gay; and he was a cheerful companion,—making the most of To-day, and caring not at all for To-morrow.

In a letter to me, written in 1880, Aldrich, in his serio-comic way, mentions facts about O'Brien that help to make more distinct the im-

age of his erratic personality and the story of his wayward career:

I made O'Brien's acquaintance in 1853. He once told me he was graduated from Dublin University, and that, on leaving college, he inherited from his father some $40,000, all of which he handsomely spent, in the course of two years, in London.

The article (about O'Brien) I prepared for "Harper's Weekly," in 1862, was returned to me. I distinctly remember my disgust. The manuscript, which lay in a drawer of my work-table for two or three years afterward, was either lost or destroyed at the time (1865) I moved to Boston.

In the years 1858-'59 O'Brien and I were very intimate; we never let a day pass without meeting. I recollect that I treated this period in detail in the missing paper. I wish you had it, or that I could lay hold of the ghost of it in my memory.

I enclose to you, as a curiosity, the first letter I ever received from O'Brien. It is the only instance I know of his signing himself "Fitz-James *de Courcy* O'Brien." You know he was "Baron Inchiquin," or something of the sort. I used to call him Baron Linchpin, when we were merry.

The merriest days depress me most when I look back to them:—as compensation, I can smile at the saddest. I half smile as I recall how hurt I was on an occasion when O'Brien borrowed $35.00 of me, to pay a pressing bill, and, instead of paying the bill, gave a little dinner at Delmonico's to which he did *not* invite *me!* Arnold and Clapp were there, and perhaps you. *I gave that dinner!*

Did O'Brien ever finish a short serial story, "The Red

Petticoat,'' which he began in some New York newspaper? I read the opening chapters in proof slips, but don't remember that I ever saw any more of it. There was a fine description of ''a run'' on a shabby Bowery bank, in the first chapter. The picture of the grim, half-insane crowd hurling itself against the bank doors lingers in my memory as something wonderfully good.

O'Brien was not the heir to a title, nor did he pretend to be. The clever, piquant, tart, and rather malicious writer, Charles F. Briggs, once prominent in New York journalism as "Harry Franco," originated and published the incorrect statement,—which was accepted by Aldrich and others,—that O'Brien was a relative of Smith O'Brien, at one time conspicuous as an Irish "agitator," and was heir to the title borne by Smith O'Brien's brother, Lord Inchiquin. Fitz-James's father was a lawyer: his mother's maiden name was de Courcy. The story of "The Scarlet Petticoat" (not Red) was begun in a paper called "Leslie's Stars and Stripes," published, for a few months, in 1859, but it was not completed. Some of O'Brien's writings have not been found. In 1881 I caused the publication of a volume of his works, containing forty-three

poems and thirteen stories; and of his writings that I have collected, from various sources, for a companion volume there are thirty pieces in prose and fifteen in verse, besides several plays, and many interesting fragments—material enough to make a book of five hundred pages.

O'Brien's letter to Aldrich, who was then sub-editor of the New York "Home Journal," is characteristic, in its playful vein:

Waverley House, Madison, N. J.,
Sept. (something or other), Tuesday.

Dear Sir: I send you a poem. If I finish another before I go to bed to-night, I will enclose it also. If you do not find it, conclude that it is not finished. The one I send you is a ballad, horrible and indigestible.

Make such corrections as you think fit, preserving carefully, at the same time, the language, spelling, punctuation, and arrangement of the verses. Anything else that you find "out of kilter" you can alter.

Seriously, if you can improve, do it fearlessly. It is the Augur who speaks to Tarquin. "Cut boldly"; an *auger* who trusts that he does not *bore*.

Paradox as it may seem, "the Fall" has already arisen. I saw her veil fluttering on the hills the other day, and some of the earliest and most servile of the trees have already put on her livery. Come out and be presented. . . .

Yours sincerely,
FITZ-JAMES DE COURCY O'BRIEN.

O'Brien had a presentiment of his early and violent death. A letter to me, from the clever and kindly artist Albert R. Waud, long since dead, who was in his company "at the front," intimates this, in words that make a significant picture:

After O'Brien became Aid on Lander's staff a feeling took possession of him that he would not long survive the commission: under its influence he became, at times, strangely softened. His buoyant epicureanism partly deserted him. He showed greater consideration for others and was less convivial than was his wont.

One night I rode with him to the camp of the First Massachusetts Battery, where the evening passed pleasantly, with cigars and punch. Some one sang the song, from "Don Cæsar de Bazan," "Then let me like a soldier die." Next morning he started, to join the General (Lander) at Harper's Ferry. As we rode he kept repeating the words of the song; said he appreciated it the more, as he had a presentiment that he should be shot, before long. He would not be rallied out of it, but remarked that he was content; and, when we parted, said good-by, as cheerfully as need be.

I heard, afterward, that medical incompetence had more to do with his death than the wound. How true it was I don't know. But the same thing was said of General Lander; and there was, at that time, a great want of surgical experience in the field.

There is a temptation, which must be resisted,

to linger on the theme of days before Black Care had claimed acquaintance—of days when Hope beckoned and Youth replied—and of vagrant comrades as heedless and merry as the whitecaps of the sea. Enough, however, has been said to indicate the character of a peculiar period of literary transition in the chief city of America,—"that unfriendly time" for letters, as the poet Stedman called it, who had dwelt in it and closely observed it,—a period when the age of Annuals and Keepsakes and Friendship's Offerings had not quite passed away, and when the epoch of free thinking and bold expression had not become entirely established. The propulsive influences of that period, greatly broadened and strengthened, are splendidly operative now, and the hard vicissitudes of such a case as that of O'Brien would be needless or impossible to-day. Poet, romancer, wanderer, soldier, he sang his song, he told his story, he met his fate like a brave man, giving his life for his adopted land, and dying,—with much promise unfulfilled, —when only thirty-four years old. As I turn away from his grave I turn away, likewise, from

the whole strange scene of vagrant literary life. The gypsy camp is broken. The music is hushed. The fires are put out. The gypsies are all gone. There is no Bohemia any more, nor ever will be, except in luxury's lap or imagination's dream.

IV.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

As I look back to the distant days of my youth, in the old cities of Boston and Cambridge, and recall the reverent devotion to literature and its eminent professors that then prevailed, I am somewhat painfully conscious of a great change that has taken place, either in public sentiment as to those subjects or in my own mind. Those were the days when Dana, Bryant, Halleck, Cooper, and Washington Irving were hallowed names, never thought of without spontaneous admiration nor mentioned without profound respect. Those were the days, also, of Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Lowell, Felton, Holmes, Mitchell, Whipple, and Henry Giles,—to mention only a few of the men then conspicuous in the realm of thought,—and around all those names there was an atmosphere of sanctity. We who were young never even dreamed of doubting the authenticity of their greatness.

Reverence for them was a religion, and that religion was generally prevalent. No such feeling seems to exist now, relative to authors, whether of the past or present. The audacious New Age ignores all reputations and challenges all claims. When Charles Dickens first visited Boston (it was as long ago as 1842), the girls in the fine mansions that he entered would throng around him and furtively cut bits of fur from his seal-skin overcoat, to be treasured as souvenirs. No writer is idolized now, in any such spirit, or in any spirit at all. In my own breast, I grieve to say, the spring of hero-worship has nearly run dry; but that, I am wishful to believe, is due to the lapse of time. Wordsworth has noticed the "sober coloring" which, from the eyes of ancient watchers of mortality, is taken by "the clouds that gather round the setting sun." For me, however, a remnant of that old devotional enthusiasm still remains. There is, for example, as there always has been, a halo around the name of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

At the time of which I speak Holmes had not yet written "The Autocrat," but his early poems,

published in 1836 and later, were known to us young readers, and we loved them well. Some of them were comic, such as "My Aunt," "The September Gale," and "The Height of the Ridiculous," while some of them were martial or pathetic, such as "Old Ironsides" and the song of greeting to Charles Dickens. The poem of "Old Ironsides" had (in 1830) saved the frigate Constitution from being demolished, and we could see her, still afloat, in the harbor, off the Navy Yard at Charlestown. The Dickens song had given to us one crystal gem of feeling and melody not to be forgotten:

> The Irish harp no longer thrills,
> Or breathes a fainter tone;
> The clarion blast from Scotland's hills,
> Alas! no more is blown;
> And Passion's burning lip bewails
> Her Harold's wasted fire,
> Still ling'ring o'er the dust that veils
> The lord of England's lyre.

It is not surprising that Holmes charmed us, for he voiced the ardor of youth and he touched, at one and the same moment, the chords that vibrate to laughter and to tears. Time adjusts

the scales in which achievement is weighed and by which reputation is finally determined. Other bards may have excelled Holmes, in later years, and to them may have been accorded a higher rank than has been accorded to him, in the estimation of his countrymen: but no American poet of the middle of the nineteenth century,—unless, perhaps, it was Longfellow,—was so much loved by the rising generation.

I saw Holmes many times before I became personally acquainted with him. He dwelt, at one time, in Montgomery Place, one of those short, secluded streets open at only one end, like the back-water eddies in the river Thames, of which, in those days, Boston possessed many. I suppose that, mostly, they are gone now. There was Federal alley, back of the Theatre. There was an alley leading from State Street into Dock Square. There was an inlet to Arch Street, and there was an arch, which I dimly remember. There was a narrow, bleak passage leading from Court Square into Washington Street, in which, as he told me long afterward, Edwin P. Whipple (best of American literary critics) once met

the illustrious lawyer and orator Rufus Choate, who passed him with a stately bow, merely ejaculating, as a comment on that dingy thoroughfare, "ignominious, but convenient." I saw Holmes, several times, emerging from "old Montgomery Place." I saw him walking in "the long path," as he afterward called it, in the quaint, tender, eminently felicitous closing chapter of "The Autocrat." I saw him (but that was at a later period) slowly and sadly pacing near the old Cragie mansion, on the desolate summer day of the funeral of Mrs. Longfellow. Once I met him on the bridge that spans the Charles river, westward, from Boston to Cambridge, and the encounter was both singular and amusing. It chanced that we were the only persons then on the bridge. We were strangers; we were on opposite sides of the causeway, proceeding in different directions; and, of course, he took no notice of me. Upon him, on the contrary, my admiring gaze was riveted. He was walking slowly, was musing, and his face was exceedingly grave; but, suddenly, without obvious reason, he burst into laughter, and his countenance

became radiant with mirth. I do not think that a more illuminative indication could be cited of the peculiar constitution of his mind. He was unconscious of being observed. He was off his guard. He was, at that moment,—although I did not know it,—the veritable humorist of the Autocrat, passing instantly from a serious thought to a merry one, and exultantly happy in the transition and the mirth of it. Much can be learned, if you have the privilege of looking at a great man when he is alone, wrapt in thought, and unconscious of observation. I once saw Daniel Webster, a little after dawn of a summer morning, pacing to and fro,—no other person in sight and no movement anywhere,—at the extreme end of Long Wharf, in Boston; and the image of that noble figure and leonine face, with its gloomy, glorious eyes, has never faded out of my memory.

The life of Holmes extended over almost the whole of the nineteenth century. He was born August 29, 1809, and he died October 7, 1894. I once heard Rufus Choate,—greatest of orators that have been heard in our country!—speak on

"The Last Days of Samuel Rogers," the gentle poet of "The Pleasures of Memory," who lived for ninety-two years, 1763 to 1855, and who, of course, had passed through a seething, tumultuous period of tremendous events and startling changes,—events and changes of which, equally of course, the superb speaker painted a magnificent picture, in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." There is, in the spacious garden of Holland House, at Kensington, an arbor, facing, at a little distance, Canova's superb bust of Napoleon Bonaparte, in which cosey retreat an inscription, composed and placed by Lord Holland, glances at the friendship of that celebrated nobleman with the equally celebrated poet:

> Here ROGERS sat, and here forever dwell,
> With me, the pleasures that he sang so well.

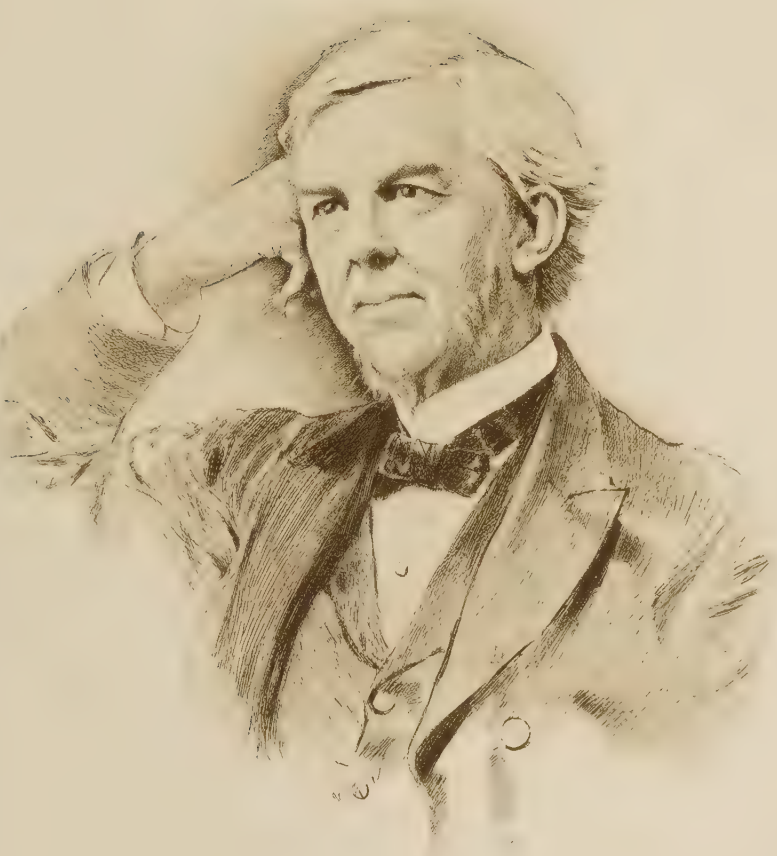
Rogers was contemporary with the war in which England lost her American Colonies; with the terrible French Revolution; and with the entire career of Napoleon; he knew Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, and all the luminaries who circled around them; he might have talked with Dr. Johnson, and would have done so but for tim-

idity; his time comprised, as to literature, all the achievements of Burns, Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Lamb, Byron, Landor, Shelley and Keats; and he lived to see the triumphs of Macaulay and Dickens and to decline the office of poet laureate, in favor of Alfred Tennyson. The period spanned by the life of Holmes was equally remarkable for social vicissitudes and prodigality of marvels, and it was even more remarkable for its amazing discoveries in science, its diffusion of intelligence, its escape from the shackles of superstition, its advancement in civilization, and its progress toward a rational fellowship of the human race. It is no part of my purpose to write his life or review his career. I wish only to say that the reader of his books discovers that he was always abreast, and often in advance, of the boldest, clearest, best thought of his day, upon every subject of vital interest to mankind. In youth he studied Law, but he soon turned from Law to Medicine, and from Medicine,—in which he was highly distinguished,—he turned to Literature, which, indeed, was his natural vocation. His first pub-

lication was made in 1834; his last in 1888. There are thirteen volumes of his works, thus far collected,—poems, novels, essays, lectures, and scientific papers,—and they are a mine of wisdom and beauty.

The author of "The Voiceless," "The Chambered Nautilus," "Under the Violets," and "The Living Temple,"—those being only exponents, eloquently indicative, in their significance, of the opulent depth of his poetic nature and faculty,—has written his name in letters of golden light, clear and imperishable, on the tablets of our national literature. Holmes was a great poet, even though he never wrote an epic, just as Gray was a great poet, for his Elegy alone. It pleased Holmes, however, to write many poems of "occasion," and he has been designated, sometimes a little disdainfully, "an occasional poet." He was more than that. His achievements in that vein, meanwhile, are incomparably fine, and the felicitous verse for "occasions" that he wrote so well was made doubly charming and splendidly effective by his beautiful delivery of it. At times when he had thus to speak he became eagerly

animated; joyously excited; keenly conscious of the intellectual value of the feat to be accomplished and of the effect to be produced. His countenance, pleasingly eccentric rather than conventionally handsome, and more remarkable for intensity and variety of expression than for regularity of feature, would, at such moments, glow with fervency of emotion; his brilliant eyes would blaze, as with interior light; his little, fragile person, quivering with the passionate vitality of his spirit, would tower with intrinsic majesty; and his voice, clear and sympathetic but neither strong nor deep, would tremble, and sometimes momentarily break, with ardor and impetuosity of feeling, while yet he never lost control of either his metrical fabric, his theme, his sensibility, or his hearers. He was a consummate artist, whether in words or in speech. On May 28, 1879, there was a festival, at the Parker House in Boston, commemorative of the centenary of the great Irish poet Thomas Moore (a man of exquisite genius, and one of the chief benefactors of the world, seeing that he set to music, in the sweetest of words and the loveliest



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

of melodies, its most sacred feelings and its best aspirations), and, as we were going into the banquet room, Holmes took me by the arm and said to me: "I shall try, to-night, to do something as nearly as possible in the manner of Moore himself, and I hope that *you* will like it." He was as eagerly interested and as tremulously nervous as a young girl might be, going to her first Reception, and he was as ingenuous and winning as a little child; yet then he was a man of 70, and he was speaking to a man but little more than half his age. His delivery of his poem was perfect,—surpassing all expectation. When he rose to speak he gazed steadily, for a few moments, at a bust of Moore, which had been placed at the further end of the hall, immediately opposite to him, and then, without a word of preamble, he ejaculated the first line of that glowing apostrophe to the dead poet,—that exquisite interpretation of his spirit,—that illuminative parallel between the two great representative bards of Ireland and Scotland ("Enchanter of Erin, whose magic has bound us!"), which, to this day, remains the most felicitous and effective occa-

sional poem existent in the English language. The effect of it was magical. A brilliant assemblage, hushed, almost breathless with excitement, hung, enraptured, upon every syllable and every tone, and when the last words rang from the speaker's lips there was such a tumult of acclamation as seemed to shake the walls. Among the auditors were James T. Fields and the tragedian John McCullough: both were deeply moved. McCullough's Irish heart, as might well be imagined, was thrilled in every fibre. Long afterward, and again and again, he spoke to me of that occasion and of the marvellous charm of the old poet's passionate eloquence. Indeed, he committed the poem to memory, and often, in the course of our wanderings together, I have heard his deep voice murmuring to himself that lovely tribute to his native land and its immortal singer:

And while the fresh blossoms of summer are braided,
For the sea-girdled, stream-silvered, lake-jewelled isle,
While her mantle of verdure is woven unfaded,
While Shannon and Liffey shall dimple and smile,
The land where the staff of St. Patrick was planted,
Where the shamrock grows green from the cliffs to the shore,

The land of fair maidens and heroes undaunted
Shall wreathe her bright harp with the garlands of Moore.

Another memorable occasion when the venerable poet put forth his characteristic and exceptional powers with brilliant effect was that of the festival in his honor that was given by the publishers of "The Atlantic Monthly," on his seventieth birthday, December 3, 1879. The place was the great hall of the Brunswick Hotel, in Boston. The assemblage, composed mainly of American authors, was one of the most distinguished that have been seen in this country. Howells, the novelist, gracefully presided, and the tables were surrounded with representatives of letters from almost every state in the Union. Holmes, profoundly agitated by the sense of private friendship and public homage, delivered his noble, pathetic poem called "The Iron Gate" —that portal which, as he so felicitously intimates, closes behind every man whose work has been done, whose task has been fulfilled, and who no longer appertains to the active movement of the Present Day. The feeling which pervades that poem dimly glimmers,—like the tender,

fading, golden twilight of an autumn day,—in Goldsmith's delicious musing on "The Deserted Village"; but nowhere in literature, aside from Holmes's poem, can be found such an ample expression of it. He read the lines sweetly, fervently, solemnly, and they touched every heart. If I mention my personal participation in the tribute paid to him on that day, it is only that I may preserve his image as I saw it then; for my place was only about twenty feet away from him, and while I was reading my poem in his honor his emotion became so excessive that he half rose from his chair, fixing upon me those brilliant eyes of his, suffused with tears that he could scarcely restrain, lost all consciousness of his surroundings, knew only that he was listening to the voice of reverence and love, and seemed more a spirit than a man.

"Youth longs and manhood strives, but age remembers." I am older now than Holmes was when he wrote that line in "The Iron Gate," and I need not hesitate to use the privilege of age, in recalling the letter that he wrote to me, a few days after that memorable meeting when,

from far and near, the writers of his native land assembled to celebrate their beloved chieftain:

296 Beacon Street, Dec. 6th, 1879.

My Dear Mr. Winter:—

I did not hurry to write to you so much as to some other friends, because I had the opportunity of telling you, face to face, what I thought of your exquisite poem. I hardly need say to you, what you must have been told many times, that it touched everybody, and brought tears from not a few eyes. It was most feelingly delivered, and yet, when I come to read it, I am not disappointed in its melody, its finish, its pathos. I was not at liberty to shed a tear that evening, or I should have had a good cry. When I cry I cry in earnest, and I made up my mind to keep a stiff upper eyelid, in spite of all temptation. If this has to follow you to New York, please remember that I called on you twice to-day, in the hope of seeing you. Believe me, dear Mr. Winter, very sincerely and gratefully yours, O. W. HOLMES.

Here are two stanzas of my poem; and I have thought that perhaps the old poet was pleased in perceiving that it did not anywhere imply expectation of his precipitate removal to realms of bliss:

The silken tress, the mantling wine,
Red roses, summer's whispering leaves,
The lips that kiss, the hands that twine,
The heart that loves, the heart that grieves—
They all have found a deathless shrine
In his rich line.

Ah well, that voice can charm us yet,
And still that shining tide of song,
Beneath a sun not soon to set,
In golden music flows along.
With dew of joy our eyes are wet—
Not of regret.

There was a playful incident of that occasion which lingers in my memory. The feast was a breakfast, beginning about noon and continuing till the early twilight of the bleak December day. Many ladies were in the company, making the beautiful scene still more beautiful. It was an occasion of state, and in that respect, as in some others, it was, among literary festivals, almost unique. The privilege fell to me of escorting to the table that accomplished gentlewoman Lucy Larcom; she who drew so well the pathetic word picture of "Poor Lone Hannah, Binding Shoes" —a poem that Whittier admired and one of which Wordsworth, had he written it, might well have been proud. I sat at her right, and on her left sat Thomas Wentworth Higginson,—stalwart among progressive thinkers, intrepid iconoclast of intrenched abuses, who, in the serenity of a lovely and honored age, contemporary and kin-

dred with that of the lamented Mitchell, represents all that is highest and therefore best in American literature. Our talk, I remember, ranged gayly over many themes, lingering for a moment on wine. The current potation chanced to be claret, and Miss Larcom, who did not taste it, was insistent (in a low tone) that I should ask Mr. Higginson to take a glass of wine with me—as, immediately, I did. His response, most courteously made, was to raise to his lips a glass of water. "But," I said, "you do not honor the toast—which is the health of our fair companion": whereupon he swallowed a teaspoonful, perhaps, of claret, with obvious impatience. I was afterward informed that he was a rigid, inveterate, iron-bound apostle of total abstinence! If his eyes should ever rest on these words he will be amused to learn that Lucy Larcom, notwithstanding all her demure gravity, was not averse to a joke, and that she was then trying her hand at a little playful mischief, of which both he and I were to be the victims. It was a merry occasion; one of those sweet times that recur to the reminiscent mind, fresh and fragrant, among the

tenderest memories of Long Ago. Stedman was one of the merriest of the company. The handsome George Lathrop was in his gayest mood. Osgood, the well-beloved publisher (and it is something of note that a publisher should be well-beloved!), seemed to have brought with him enough of sunshine to flood the room. Aldrich, that fine genius, "the frolic and the gentle" (as Wordsworth so happily said of Charles Lamb), was, as ever, demure in his kindly satire and piquant in his spontaneous, playful wit. The gracious presence of Nora Perry and Louise Chandler Moulton charmed the festival, while amply representing the best in poetic art that has been accomplished by the female writers of our land. But for the absence of two or three of the veterans, kept away by illness (who, nevertheless, sent their tributes), there was not a vestige of a cloud over that bright throng. Some of those happy guests have flitted to ghost-land since, and they will come no more, except, shadow-like, in pages such as this. Dear comrades, gone before, but not forgotten, I write your names, not with a tear but with a smile!

The world is better and brighter because you have lived in it, and soon we shall all meet again!

My divination, as to the veteran's future, at that seventieth birthday festival was amply justified. He survived for nearly fifteen years, and some of his loveliest poems are among the products of those latter days. Even in the vein of Occasional Verse the limit of his achievement had not been reached, nor was it reached till near the end of his life. Once, adverting to that topic, he wrote to me (February 20, 1883), as follows:

> I have done my share in paying tributes of respect to many poets of our own land and other lands, and the time has come when I must claim the privilege of leaving the kind of tasks I have so often undertaken—grateful and honorable as they are—to others who can do full justice to occasions. . . . I told the gentleman who called me up at a dinner the other day that I was an Emeritus Professor, after more than thirty-five years' service,—but an Emeritus as Occasional Versifier of more than *Fifty years'* standing, and entitled to plead my privilege. . . .

Holmes was fond of the Stage, and that was an additional bond of sympathy between him and me. One of the happiest of his achievements in that difficult Queen Anne style of verse which he used with such brilliant facility (difficult verse

because, unlike some other rhythmical forms, it will not allow the substitution of melody for meaning, but exacts thought as well as music), is the pictorial, touching poem of "The Old Player." He wrote the Ode for the Shakespearean Tercentennial Celebration in 1864. He wrote the Address—and a fine one it is!—for the opening of the lamented Augustin Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, in New York, in 1873. Writing to me (April 25, 1893, when he had received my "Shadows of the Stage"), he said:

> I remember Mary Duff well, in the character of Desdemona. Forrest and *Cooper*—"the noblest Roman of them all"—used to take *Othello* and *Iago*, by turns, interchanging parts. I remember the elder Booth and others, and, of course, I am glad to know something about them. Many thanks for the book and the pleasure it gives me. . . .

Many years ago, when, by chance, we met at the old Globe Theatre, in Boston, and he asked me to name the greatest, in my judgment, of the American actors then prominent, he was, I remember, surprised that I thought Comedy more exacting than Tragedy, and named the comedian Jefferson, then at the zenith of his wonderful career. But, whether comedy or tragedy, the

drama was dear to him, and he wrote from his heart when he wrote that

> The poet's song, the bright romancer's page,
> The tinsel'd shows that cheat us on the stage,
> Lead all our fancies captive to their will:
> Three years or threescore, we are children still!

I recall with sorrow and joy my last meeting with Holmes,—sorrow because it was the last, and joy because it was so pleasant and because it left in my memory such a brilliant image alike of the poet and the man. It occurred at his final home in Beacon Street, Boston, a few weeks after the death of his wife. Mrs. Holmes had been ill for a long time, and, as her mind had become somewhat enfeebled, her death was a blest release from mortal durance. The bereaved husband spoke to me freely about her, with deep tenderness, with sweet gravity, and with that winning gentleness for which he was remarkable. There are some men whose minds pass quickly from solemnity to a kind of wistful playfulness. The comedian Jefferson was such a man. Holmes possessed the same sensitive, mercurial temperament, the same capability of

instantaneous perception of the humorous side of serious things. "I don't go much into company now," he said; "because, when a man has suffered such a loss as mine, people observe him curiously, and seem to be wondering whether he looks quite as sorry as he ought to look." As he spoke his face brightened; he glanced around at the teeming book-shelves in his study, and then he added: "but my dear daughter has come to live with me; she is putting things in order; and we have begun the world anew."

My son Louis, now dead, was present at that interview, and he had timidly expressed the desire to possess a signed photograph of the poet. "You shall have it, my boy," said the kind veteran; and immediately he produced a picture of himself and began to write upon it. Then, pausing, with suspended pen, he looked earnestly at the lad, and said, with an indescribably arch smile and tone: "Ten—twenty—perhaps even thirty years from now—somebody may be interested to hear you say that you received this picture from the hands of the original;—sometimes writers are remembered even as long as that."

The picture remains, but both the generous giver and the grateful recipient are gone. I tried to lead my old friend to speak of earlier times; of the famous group of New England authors in which he had been the most brilliant figure; and of the first days of "The Atlantic Monthly"; but he was interested more in the Present than in the Past. Once, indeed, he became reminiscent of his youth, and, asking me to come to a window wherefrom could be obtained a wide prospect of the river Charles and the level expanse of country westward of it, he indicated a certain pane through which we looked together, and he said: "It is not every man who can see, at one glance, and through one pane of glass, the house where he was born, the college where he was educated, and the ground in which his ashes will rest; yet there they are for me." There indeed they were, golden in the radiance of the afternoon sun;—old Cambridge, in the distance, where his parental mansion still fronts the village green; the quaint buildings, easily discernible, of Harvard College; and, more remote, but in nearly the same line of vision, the round tower that overtops its

central hill, among the multitudinous graves of Mount Auburn cemetery.

Almost immediately then,—though not till after a moment of musing,—he reverted to inquiry about my pursuits and labors in the great city. "Ah!" he exclaimed; "New York is a wonderful place! The *hydrants* are flowing there!" His eyes seemed to blaze, as he spoke, and his person to dilate. He was diminutive; very slight; but he was wonderfully vital; his little figure possessed extraordinary dignity; and even the slightest conscious sense of the splendor of power and of action seemed to awaken in him an indomitable spirit of emulative sympathy and creative will. One of his class-mates at Harvard, that fine, erratic genius Charles T. Congdon,—many years afterward one of my colleagues and friends,—told me that Holmes, even in his college days, was remarkable for many peculiarities, and was especially remarkable for the impressive stateliness of his demeanor on ceremonial occasions,—a natural stateliness, from which physical exility could not detract. Humorist he was, from the first, possessing a faculty of humor more

sprightly than that of Addison, but, like that of Addison, underlaid with noble pride of intellect, purity of heart, and a profoundly reverential spirit. His last word to me was one of blessing, whereof the remembrance has cheered me in many a dark hour and taught patience in many a moment of trial: so that,—remembering his example, for so many years cherished, and his personal kindness, that only ceased with life,—I am moved to re-echo the prayerful apostrophe with which Tickell adjured the shade of Addison, in one of the most beautiful elegies in our language:

> Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,
> To me thine aid, thou guardian genius, lend;
> When rage misguides me, or when fears alarm,
> When pain distresses, or when pleasures charm,
> In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,
> And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart.

V.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

In one of the lyrics of Aldrich there is a thought that must have come to thousands of persons, but that only he has expressed. The poet is waiting for his wife,—as she "sets the white rose in her hair,"—and they are to drive to a festival: and suddenly, amid the suggested surroundings of happiness, the prescience of death comes upon him:

> I wonder what day of the week,
> I wonder what month of the year;
> Will it be midnight or morning;
> And who will bend over my bier.

The day of the week was to be Tuesday. The month of the year was to be March. He died on Tuesday, March 19, 1907, at half-past five in the afternoon. "In spite of all I am going to sleep," he said: "put out the lights." He had lived a little more than seventy years. During the last fifty-two of those years I had the privilege of his friendship, and, although our path-

ways were different, and we could not often meet, the affection between us, that began in our youth, never changed. We were born in the same year, 1836; he in November, I in July. We entered on the literary life in the same year, 1854, when his first book was published, in New York, and my first book was published, in Boston: and from that time till the last our greetings were exchanged across the distance, and there never was a cloud between us. In sending to me the complete edition of his works,—there are eight volumes,—he wrote this inscription:

Redman Farm, Ponkapog, Mass.,
November 6, 1897.

To William Winter.

Dear Will: I set your name and mine here, in happy memory of a friendship dating from our boyhood.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

An old man, I think, may be glad and proud of such a friendship. Time, care, and trouble tend to deaden the emotions. Affection does not often last for more than half a century. Our acquaintance began in almost a romantic way. It happened that in 1854 a part of my employment was the occasional writing of miscellaneous

articles,—book notices, etc.,—for "The Boston Transcript." That paper,—less important and less opulent than it is now, but always a favorite in Boston,—was then edited by Daniel N. Haskell, a kindly, somewhat eccentric man, who had abandoned mercantile business in order to adopt the pursuit of journalism, who knew Boston society well, and who possessed the skill to please mediocrity without disturbing it by any obtrusion of superfluous intellect. I recall a remark of his that was happily characteristic of him, and that it has often been a comfort to remember. "There are many people in this town, Willy," he said, "who think that you and I are fools; but as long as we know that we are *not,* it makes no difference to us." He had taken a fancy to me, as the phrase goes, and he was willing to encourage my aspirations as a writer. His custom was to give to me some of the volumes, particularly those of verse, that came to his paper, for review, and one day he gave me a book called "Poems, By T. B. A." I read it with pleasure and reviewed it with praise. The author of it was Aldrich, then residing in New York. "The

Transcript" containing my little tribute speedily found its way to him, and immediately he responded by publishing, in the New York "Home Journal," a poem dedicated to "W. W." Then, of course, I wrote a letter to him, and thereafter we had a correspondence lasting several months, in the course of which we explained ourselves to each other, in that strain of ardent, overflowing sentiment which is possible only when life is young, and hearts are fresh, and all the world seems beautiful with hope. One day in 1855, at twilight, I happened to be in the editorial sanctum of "The Transcript" (the building was then in Congress Street), waiting for Haskell to finish his labors, as he had asked me to dine with him, at the old Revere House,—a stately hotel then, where he had long been resident. The chair in which I was sitting was one that could be revolved. Haskell was writing, by a dim light. A young man came into the room and addressed him, saying "My name is Aldrich." Before he could say another word Haskell seized my chair, whirled it around so that I could face the visitor, and said "*This* is William Winter." That was

our meeting, and a very sweet and gracious meeting it was. We presently repaired to the Revere House, where the occasion was celebrated, and Aldrich and I became Tom and Will to each other; and so we remained, to the end of the chapter.

In the season of 1859-'60 I left Boston and found a residence in New York. The nation, at that time, was trembling on the verge of Civil War. New York was seething with indescribable excitement, and a fever of expectancy was everywhere visible. There were not many theatres in operation at that time, but there were many "dives." Newspapers were less numerous than they are now, and less wealthy, and the aspect of them was that of singular contrast. Horace Greeley's "Tribune," devoted to Anti-Slavery, was published in a low, common building, at the corner of Nassau and Spruce streets,—where its palace now stands. Rushmore G. Horton's "Day Book," devoted to Pro-Slavery, was published in a building close by. "The World," started in 1860, was a religious newspaper, specially devoted to the saving of souls. "The Home Journal" was

a conspicuous literary authority of the hour, conducted by the two bards, Nathaniel P. Willis and George P. Morris. Major Noah's conservative "Sunday Times" was in existence. Free Masonry had an organ called "The Dispatch." James and Erastus Brooks were prosperous with "The Evening Express." The poet Bryant was advocating democracy, in "The Evening Post." The elder Bennett led the field of news with "The Herald." The sheet that most attracted me was a paper called "The Saturday Press," published in Spruce Street, where also Charles F. Briggs, —"Harry Franco" being his pen name,—was publishing "The Courier," a weekly sheet in which Augustin Daly, about the same time, began his career as a writer. "The Saturday Press" had been started in 1858, by Henry Clapp and Edward Howland, and, for a little while, Aldrich was associated with Clapp, in the writing of it. I had already contributed verses to that paper,—among others the poem of "Orgia,"—and presently Clapp employed me as a reviewer and sub-editor, and so began my Bohemian life: impecunious, but interesting; impoverished, but de-

lightful; burdened with labor and hardship, but careless and happy,—happier than any kind of life has been since or will be again. No literary circle comparable with the Bohemian group of that period, in ardor of genius, variety of character, and singularity of achievement, has since existed in New York, nor has any group of writers anywhere existent in our country been so ignorantly and grossly misrepresented and maligned. I glance at that period now only because the figure of Aldrich momentarily appears in it. He was at that time dwelling in the abode of his uncle, a portly merchant, named Frost, at No. 105, now 331, West Eighth Street, immediately opposite to the northern end of Macdougal Street. That abode, it is interesting to remember, was, at a later time, bought by Douglas Taylor, that able and genial theatrical recorder and antiquarian, who dwelt in it for eight years, and by whom it is still owned (1909). The house is now occupied by tradesmen, and its aspect, like that of its neighborhood, is changed; but it will long possess an interest for the literary pilgrim, because there Aldrich wrote, among many other things, the

poem of "Babie Bell," which has had a world-wide circulation; the beautiful poem of "The Unforgiven"; and the first draft of his "Judith," long afterward wrought into a play; and there, as a passing guest, that brilliant Irishman, Fitz-James O'Brien, wrote the story of "What Was It?" A time arrived when Tom grew weary of Bohemia, and I remember we had a serious talk about it. "Do you mean," he asked me, "to cast in your lot permanently with those writers? Do you intend to remain with them?" I answered yes. He then told me of his purpose to leave New York, as eventually he did, establishing his residence in Boston, where, by and by, he became editor of "Every Saturday" and later of "The Atlantic Monthly," and where he had his career, in constantly increasing prosperity and universal respect. There he was happily married; there his twin sons were born (R. H. Stoddard, after that, jocosely mindful of his initials, T. B., called him "Two-Baby Aldrich"); and there he died, in the fulness of his literary fame. No sweeter lyrical poet has appeared in America. His touch was as delicate as that of Herrick, whom

he loved but did not imitate, and his themes are often kindred with those of that rare spirit,—the Ariel of sentiment, fancy, and poetic whim.

In my Bohemian days it was my fortune—or misfortune, as the case may be—to meet often and to know well the American bard Walt Whitman. It is scarcely necessary to say that he did not impress me as anything other than what he was, a commonplace, uncouth, and sometimes obnoxiously coarse writer, trying to be original by using a formless style, and celebrating the proletarians who make the world almost uninhabitable by their vulgarity. With reference to me Walt's views were expressed in a sentence that, doubtless, he intended as the perfection of contemptuous indifference. "Willy," he said, "is a young Longfellow." But I remember one moment when he contrived to inspire Aldrich with a permanent aversion. The company was numerous, and the talk was about poetry. "Yes, Tom," said the inspired Whitman, "I like your *tinkles:* I like them very well." Nothing could have denoted more distinctly both complacent egotism and ill-breeding. Tom, I think, never forgot

that incident. This is one of the "tinkles,"—written long afterward,—defining the Poet:

> Kings and Queens
> Are facile accidents of Fame and Chance.
> Chance sets them on the heights, they climb'd not there!
> But he who, from the darkling mass of men,
> Is, on the wing of heavenly thought, upborne
> To finer ether, and becomes a voice
> For all the voiceless, God anointed him:
> His name shall be a star, his grave a shrine.

In those Bohemian days I participated in various talks with Walt Whitman, and once I asked him to oblige me with his definition of "the Poet." His answer was: "A poet is a Maker."

"But, Walt," I said, "what does he make?"

He gazed upon me for a moment, with that bovine air of omniscience for which he was remarkable, and then he said: "He makes Poems."

That reply was deemed final. I took the liberty, all the same, of suggesting to him that no person, poet or otherwise, can do more than disclose and interpret what God has made;—seeing that everything in Nature existed,—even the most minute and delicate impulses of the spirit that is in humanity,—before ever man began to

make poems about anything. The words of the poet occasionally take a form that is inevitable,—seeming to have been intended from the beginning of the world: there are examples of that felicity of form in Shakespeare, in Wordsworth, in Byron's "Childe Harold," and in Shelley's "Adonais"; but the word "creative" has been, and continually is, too freely used. Nature is creative, and the Poet is the voice of Nature. It was a raucous voice when it issued from Whitman: it pipes, like a penny whistle, when it issues from his paltry imitators.

In one of his earlier letters to me, written before we met, Tom gave me a brief account of his life. I had asked for it, and the story is so fraught with characteristic touches that I find it as delightful now as I found it then. Thus he wrote to me, July 25, 1855:

I saw the completion of my eighteenth year November 11, 1854. I was born at Portsmouth, and have spent only one-fifth of my life in that beautiful town. I could boast of a long line of ancestors, but won't. They are of no possible benefit to me, save it is pleasant to think that none of them were hanged for criminals or shot for traitors, but that many of them are sleeping somewhere near Bunker Hill. I come in a straight line from President Adams, and

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his son mentions me in his "book of the Adams family." Being only three months of age when Mr. Adams put me in his book, he neglected to mention my gift of rhyme, which was very shabby in him. My genealogical tree, you will observe, grew up some time after the Flood, with other vegetation. I will spare myself, this warm day, the exercise of climbing up its dead branches, and come down to one of the lower "sprigs," but by no means "the last leaf upon the tree." My early life was spent in travel. I have been in every State in the Union. My father was a merchant at the South and I lived in New Orleans five years. Some six years ago my parents sent me "North," to be educated. While at school at Portsmouth my father died, and my mother returned to Portsmouth. Two years since my uncle, an eminent New York merchant, offered me a place in his counting-room, which I accepted and have since occupied. I am one of his family and he has been to me a brother and a father. I enjoy the lofty and richer pleasures of life keenly, and the love of beauty, in every form, has become a part of my soul. I value money only because it buys books. I have neither brother nor sister. I am an only child, but not a spoilt one, and do not expect to be unless you spoil me, and make me vain, by loving me too much. Such is he who signs himself, in the bonds of friendship, T. B. A.

In another of those early letters he told me of his reverence for the poet Longfellow, whom he had not met but about whom I had written to him, and he described, in a way that is especially interesting and touching, the awakening in

his soul of the poetic faculty, then dormant, which was destined to make him one of the sweetest voices of the human heart that our time has heard:

> You speak warmly in praise of your poet friend. I join you with my heart, in every word. I think this world must be lovelier in God's eyes for holding such men as Longfellow. . . . I will tell you why I like him so much, and how I came to write verse.
>
> One evening, more than five years ago, I was sitting on the doorstep of "the old house where I was born," with as heavy a heart as a child ever had. A very dear friend had been borne over that threshold a while before, and, as I watched the shadows of the trees opposite grow deeper, I longed for her. I missed a hand that used to touch my hair so gently! I was not fond of reading poetry, though I feasted on prose. By chance a volume of poems was in my hand: it was the "Voices of the Night." I opened at "The Footsteps of Angels." Never before did I feel such a gush of emotion. The poem spoke to me like a human voice; and from that time I loved Longfellow, and I wrote poetry—such as it is. Often since I have heard something rustle near me, and I am sure it was not the wind.

More than half a century has passed since Aldrich wrote those words, and both he and the poet whom he loved have entered into their rest. Their graves are not far apart, in the beautiful cemetery of Mount Auburn. It is singular and impressive to remember that the last poem that fell

from the pen of Aldrich was the elegy that commemorates the centenary of Longfellow.

There is a peculiarly gentle, affectionate spirit in my old comrade's early letters to me, and they reveal him in a charming light. It would be easy to fill pages with rightly selected extracts from them,—violating no confidence and wounding no sensibility of surviving relatives and friends,—all tending to show what manner of youth he was, as manifested in words that came directly from his heart, and that never have been seen by any eyes but mine. His published writings exhibit his soul, as the writings of a poet always do. As to the writing of letters: in after years, like the rest of us, he acquired what we call "worldly wisdom," and he restrained his feelings; but he never lost them. The child was father to the man; and the man, to the end of his days, was the apostle of beauty and the incarnation of kindness. His character rested upon a basis of prudence, and in the conduct of life he was conventional. There was nothing in his nature of the stormy petrel. Hard experience,—bitter, heart-breaking conflict with adverse circumstances,—would, probably,

have repressed his genius and defeated his ambition. He never was subjected to it. Of all his early troubles he told me, and no one of them was unusual or severe. In the spring of 1856, I remember, he left mercantile employment, which to him must have been a farce, and became subeditor of "The Home Journal." "I had no idea of what *work* is" (so he wrote to me), "till I became 'sub.' I have found that reading proof and writing articles on uninteresting subjects, 'at sight,' is no joke. The cry for 'more copy' rings through my ears in dreams, and hosts of little phantom printers' devils walk over my body all night and prick me with sharp-pointed types! Last evening I fell asleep in my arm-chair and dreamed that they were about to put me 'to press,' as I used to crush flies between the leaves of my speller, in school-boy days." Such an experience was mere child's play in contrast with the habitual experience of the journalist of later years. Good fortune always attended Tom Aldrich. The death of one of his sons was the only cruel blow of affliction that ever fell upon him, and he never recovered from it. His writings

reveal a mind that had the privilege of brooding over its conceptions till it found the best means of expressing them. Some of his short stories are exquisite in their felicitous finished utterance of his fancy, sentiment, and humor. His essay on Herrick is one of the most acute, searching, truthfully pointed, and lightly and rightly phrased pieces of criticism that have been written. His poetry is supreme in the element of grace, and he maintained precisely the right attitude toward it and toward criticism of it—as shown in his bantering little quatrain of "Quits":

> If my best wines mislike thy taste,
> And my best service win thy frown,
> Then tarry not, I bid thee haste;
> There's many another Inn in town!

Those lines aptly indicate his characteristic attribute of playful humor. He possessed a happy faculty of quick rejoinder and quizzical remark. One day, in London, I remember, we went to the grave of the poet Goldsmith and visited the Temple church, in which there is an organ, said to have been given to that place of worship by the infamous Judge Jeffreys, in the reign of James II. The sexton, who showed the

church, expatiated to us upon its contents, taking many liberties with English history and the letter "h," and dwelt especially upon its age. "That *h*organ," he said, " 'as been 'ere as much as five 'undred years." "Well," said Tom, "then I suppose it could play *'Old Hundred'* all by itself."

One night, aboard the steamship " Servia," he and Lawrence Barrett and I were pleasantly occupied, on the upper deck, discussing Shakespeare, and I remember that he drove Barrett nearly crazy by his playful, but apparently serious, dissection of Macbeth's soliloquy, beginning "If it were done when 'tis done." "How could a naked, new born babe stride a blast, or stride anything else?" was, I recall, one of the queries that he solemnly proposed to the earnest tragedian, who, for a long time, took the subject very much to heart,—as indeed his custom invariably was when talking about Shakespeare. It is possible only to indicate in words, it is not possible to express, the furtive archness, the demure manner, the nimble spirit with which Aldrich could, and often did, converse with serious persons. On that same " Servia " voyage a notice was posted in the gang-

way, of the loss of "a petrified eye." It had not been there long before Tom, eluding official vigilance as to such matters, managed to post a notice along side of it of his loss of a novel called "Anne," upon which, his placard said, "the owner would like to cast his petrified eye." Trifles: but it was his way to make trifles droll, and, while at heart he was earnest and thoughtful, on the surface it pleased him to be gravely gay; and he went through life diffusing sunshine all around his path.

Once, in Paris, he invited Mark Twain to take a stroll, saying that he had something to show to him, very interesting and worthy of special attention. The "stroll" proved to be a walk of about a mile, round and round, along contiguous streets, ending at a book-store, near to the hotel, in the Rue St. Honoré, from which the pedestrians had started. One of the books displayed in the window was a copy of the Poems of Aldrich. "I have asked this shop-keeper," said Tom, "if he has any more of the works of Aldrich, and he says No; so you see the sale has been very large—for this is the only copy left; but he says

he has several shelves full of the works of Mark Twain, and more of them in the basement. I'm afraid you are not appreciated in France." The sale of Twain's book had, actually, of course, been very large.

Once at a dinner in honor of Lord Houghton (the poet, Richard Monckton Milnes, whose "Poems of Many Years" include some of the loveliest things in our literature), Aldrich chanced to be seated beside the chief guest, and presently he observed that Houghton had mislaid his napkin and was vainly looking for it. The napkin had, in fact, fallen to the floor. Tom kindly picked it up and restored it to the noble bard, quoting as he did so two lines from one of his lordship's poems:

> A man's best things are nearest him—
> Lie close about his feet.

The place of Aldrich in American Literature will be determined by posterity. There can be no doubt that his works will live. The poems that he wrote when under the influence of the genius of Tennyson are echoes of the style of that great poet,—the master as well of blank verse as of the

lyric form,—and, probably, they will be remembered and esteemed as chiefly echoes. The poems, meantime, that bear the authentic signet of his mind are original, individual, characteristic, and of permanent value. The attributes of them are loveliness of sentiment, tenderness of feeling, a fine, rippling play of subtle suggestion, a dream-like atmosphere, pensive sweetness, and delicious spontaneity of verbal grace. In youth his mind was attracted by Oriental themes, such as Moore would have fancied; but in manhood his Muse preferred graver subjects, and often, even beneath the guise of playful whim, he touched the springs of pathos and spoke from the heart. At no time did he become didactic. His poetic sense, in that respect, was unerring. He knew that poetry should not aim to teach, but should glide through the mind as sunbeams glide through the air. Once, in a talk with me about Oliver Wendell Holmes (always, in my thoughts, an object of affectionate admiration), he said, half playfully, half in earnest: "In the doctor's poetry there is not enough *moonshine*." By that word he meant the nameless, indefinable charm, the something that hallows every object

in an exquisite landscape or diffuses a sacred atmosphere, half of rapture and half of awe, around the beauty of woman. It is my conviction that his poems, sweet and tender, beautifully expressive of human affection,—which is the immortal part of us,—and lovely in style, will endure as long as anything endures in our language. The view that he took of them, however, was far more humble,—as expressed in a letter to me, from which I make this extract: "I am not too confident about the fate of these things, in the immediate future. Fashions change in literature, and perhaps our cut of poetry will not be worn at all, twenty years from now. If it isn't, what odds will it make?"

No odds whatever. The writer who can cheer the time in which he lives, who can help the men and women of his generation to bear their burdens patiently and do their duty without wish or expectation of reward, has fulfilled his mission. Such a writer was Thomas Bailey Aldrich. As I think of him I am encouraged to believe, more devoutly than ever, that the ministry of beauty is the most important influence operant upon society, and that it never can fail.

VI.

BAYARD TAYLOR

WHAT is Poetry, and what are the faculties that constitute a Poet? In the course of a long life, devoted to the art of writing, I have talked with many authors and have read hundreds of books; but I have not obtained an explicit, illuminative, decisive answer to those inquiries. The critic is ready with his theory; the rhetorical treatise is ready with its definition; but neither theory nor definition reveals the heart of the mystery. The thing that is *not* Poetry, though set forth in verse, is readily recognized, and it can be distinctly defined: the magic that irradidiates verse and makes poetry out of prose is felt rather than known, and exact specification of it eludes the dexterity of the grammarian.

Observation likewise perceives, among even expert writers and judges of verse, wide disparities of opinion as to the poetic element. John-

son, who admired Young, could see no poetry in Gray. Byron, who admired Pope, could see no poetry in Cowper. To Macaulay, the nightingale was Milton, and, comparatively, other singers were wrens. Thackeray, who disliked Byron, was charmed with Addison's lines on the Spacious Firmament, and he found Johnson's "Ode on the Death of Levett" so poetic as to be "sacred." Carlyle despised Lamb, but he adored Burns. Coleridge, the worshiper of Wordsworth, was contemptuous of Moore. Poe belittled Burns and disparaged Longfellow, but he perceived divine fire in Mrs. Browning. Emerson, usually centred in himself, was able to perceive poetry in Walt Whitman. Aldrich, the disciple of Herrick, was blind to the intrinsic glamour of Holmes. Great scholars, likewise, exhibit wide diversities of opinion as to poetry and poets. Fox, the statesman, for example, who possessed extraordinary scholarship, cared not at all for Wordsworth, esteemed Dryden before Milton, and ranked Homer above them all.

Among the bards themselves there is, further-

more, a perplexing disparity of method in the invocation of the Muse. Whence is the impulse derived? Scott affirmed that, while he took no pains with his prose, he wrote his verse with great care. Byron was accustomed to incite inspiration by reading a fine passage from some other poet, after which he would write at full speed, in a fever heat. Moore found poetic stimulant in looking at the sunset. Wordsworth, keenly susceptible to every influence of physical Nature, walked alone, in the lonely, beautiful Cumberland country, composing his verses, often speaking them aloud, and committing them to memory as he composed them. Burns, apparently the most sweetly natural singer since Shakespeare (as long ago was said by William Pitt), himself testified that the influence that most exalted and enraptured him was that of a stormy wind howling among the trees and raging over the plain, and that whenever he wanted to be " more than ordinary in song " he put himself " on a regimen of admiring a fine woman." Richard Henry Stoddard,—whose " Songs of Summer " comprise some of the loveliest and some of,

apparently, the most spontaneous lyrics existent in the English language,—told me that sometimes he wrote the first draft of a poem in prose, and afterward turned it into verse. Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose poetic achievement made his name illustrious in American literature, told me that it was his custom to select with care the particular form of verse that he designed to use, and sometimes to invent the rhymes and write them at the ends of the lines which they were to terminate,—thus making a skeleton of a poem, as a ground-work on which to build. To my mind it seems that the poet should be like the Æolian harp, which makes music when its strings were swept by the breeze; but, in the presence of so much perplexity of fact and opinion, a certain audacity appears to be requisite to declare that anybody is a poet or that anything is poetry.

Years ago I had the pleasure of friendly intercourse with one man of letters who possessed, in ample measure, that particular form of intrepidity. That man was the Rev. William Rounseville Alger, at one time a popular preacher in

Boston, and famous for his impassioned eloquence. Alger will be remembered as the biographer (1877) of the tragedian Edwin Forrest, and also because of the service that he did to literature by composing, or translating, or paraphrasing a considerable number of Oriental poems, valuable alike for their meaning and their melody. He was a man of acute and copious sensibility, of a feminine temperament, quickly and keenly appreciative, and easily moved to tears. No poet could have wished for a more receptive, responsive auditor. The poetic element that especially he recognized and loved was *feeling,* and that element he found in the poetry of Bayard Taylor, whom he ranked, and did not hesitate to designate, in several conversations with me, as the " foremost and best of American poets."

I never had the opportunity of mentioning that opinion to Bayard Taylor,—a fact which I deeply regret; for the knowledge of it would have been a great satisfaction to him. Taylor was a rapid, discursive, voluminous writer: few American authors have written so much and in such various

departments of literature: but, of all his writing, that which he chiefly valued,—that in comparison with which the rest, in his esteem, was accounted nothing,—was his poetry. On that subject he often spoke and wrote to me, and always with the candor that was eminently characteristic of his ingenuous, simple nature;—for, with great practical knowledge of the world, Bayard Taylor was simplicity itself. I recall a remark of his to me that seemed to reveal, in a flash, his whole nature: "What a lovely day this is!" he said; "*I'm going home to write poetry!*" As he spoke he was the personification of exultant happiness.

Taylor's rank as a poet will be determined after another generation of readers has arisen,—when he is no longer remembered as, specifically, a traveller and a journalist; and that rank will be high. He was, distinctively, a poet, but, under the pressure of necessity, he delved in so many lines of literary labor that his miscellaneous publicity obscured him in the vision of his own period. It has taken America some time to learn fully the exceptional value and abiding

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charm of such noble verse as that of William Cullen Bryant and such exquisite prose as that of Donald Grant Mitchell, and to realize that it possessed, in Fitz-Greene Halleck, one of the strongest, sweetest poets that have swept the harp-strings of the human heart. Time will do justice to the fine poetic genius of Bayard Taylor.

Good fortune attended Taylor's career (1825-'78), but the full recognition that he merited was not accorded till after his death; and possibly it would not have been accorded then but for the indubitable success of his magnificent metrical version of "Faust." It is the conventional opinion that a writer who succeeds in one thing must, necessarily, fail in others. Taylor's conceded renown, with the multitude, was that of a traveller and a lecturer on travel. The fact that he was novelist, dramatist, and,—above all else,—poet, was unappreciated, and sometimes even unknown. A humorous incident, related to me by him, illustrates this ludicrous truth.

"I had delivered a lecture in one of our rural towns,"—so said my old friend,—"and several

of my auditors were accosting me with expressions of their satisfaction. One person, in particular, was effusively eager,—saying 'I am *delighted,* Mr. Taylor, to make your acquaintance. *I have read everything that you have ever written,* and I have greatly enjoyed it all.' This was pleasant to hear, and, as he grasped my hand with evident friendship, I responded with a request for his opinion of my poetry. A look of overwhelming astonishment and perplexity came into his face. 'Your Poetry?' he exclaimed; "have you ever written any *Poetry?*' This, I need not tell you, satisfied my curiosity."

The humor of that incident was not lost upon the poet. Indeed, a sense of humor was one of Taylor's most propitious and most charming attributes, and with him, as with all other persons who possess that blessing, it served as a shield against petty troubles and as a cordial stimulant to philosophical views of life. He was like a boy, also, in his love of fun. I remember the glee with which he told me of a personal experience at the home of that austere philosopher and preceptor, the Rev. Horace Mann,—a cler-

gyman, orator, and reformer, at one time very prominent in New England life,—among whose several enthusiastic propensities of culture was a fanatical devotion to the use, external and internal, of cold water. "Every morning the year round," said Taylor, "he immersed himself in it; he drank nothing else; and he seemed to expect his guests to follow his example. I had delivered a lecture in his town, and I was kindly entertained at his home. It was mid-winter and bitterly cold. I found in my bedroom a huge tub of icy water, intended for my morning bath; and my host directed my attention to it, with strong approval of its utility. I had a good wash, when the morning came, but not in that tub! He was left, however, in the comforting belief that I had taken the plunge,—for I managed to wet all the towels and to scatter water all over the floor. He was an excellent person, and it would have been a pity to disappoint him."

A conspicuous product of Taylor's playful humor is the "Echo Club," first published serially and afterward (1876) in a book. It incorporates imitations of the styles of many of the

writers of verse who were his contemporaries, and therein it follows the tradition of the "Rejected Addresses" and is remotely kindred with the delicious comicalities of Calverley. Adverting to those squibs, which are, in fact, parodies, he sent this message to me, from Gotha, October 6, 1872:

My Dear Winter:

I recognize your hand in the address of two packages of papers which I have received during the last week or two. I was very glad to get them, especially the daily Tribunes, which have so much more of New York and of the Trib. office about them than has the semi-weekly, which I get regularly. I hope you will as kindly remember my needs, every now and then. . . .

All the papers were welcome, I assure you, and even the sight of your unforgeable MS. was refreshing to mine eyes. Moreover here was evidence that you have already forgiven me for my abominable effort at imitating some of your best poems, making comic the very qualities in them which I most enjoy. I may congratulate myself, I think, on having finished the series of travesties without having (so far as I know) given lasting offence to any of the victims. Yet, stay!—I almost doubt of being pardoned by Mrs. Howe. It was a perilous undertaking, just at present, and I might easily have had worse luck. . . .

I am now rejoicing in a general freshness of mind and body, the result of laziness, Alpine air, baths and drinking disagreeable waters. I only perceive now, by the contrast

with my condition six months ago, how much I needed the treatment. One can't always tell when one's barometer is low. Mine has risen so much that I have begun to relieve myself of a poetic idea which has been plaguing me for five or six years. I have only 200 lines written, and I foresee that it will run to 2,000. But I am also doing hack work for Scribners, in the hope of purchasing the right to use my own time in my own way.

We spent August at the baths of Bormio, in the Italian Alps, then went to Como and the other lakes, and over the Simplon to Lausanne, where we stayed a fortnight with my sister. I ran down to Geneva, the last day of the Arbitration. Ralph Keeler and J. R. Young were there, and we had a wonderful breakfast. We reached here just ten days ago, and here we stay until the end of the year. You see the absence has not been eventful thus far. I am slowly collecting material for Goethe's life, and am delighted with its richness and interest. But it will take time to digest such a mass.

Now what are you all about in New York? In the Trib. office you must be a set of howling dervishes until this furious campaign is over. I count the days, for although I am out of the vortex, some of its unrest reaches me even here.

I have a strange fancy that something has happened to Stoddard, or Elizabeth, or Lorry. It came upon me the day we reached here, and when I spoke of it to my wife I was startled to find that she had the same impression. As some of my presentiments have come true, this worries me, and I pray that it is a mere freak of the imagination. I shall be only too glad to be laughed at.

I think I'll inclose a note to Stedman in this, as I'm not certain of his present address, and you'll probably know it.

Do write to me when you have time, and give me all the gossip, literary or otherwise. I don't expect to hear from any one else in the Trib. until after November 8. Give my love to all the good fellows. My wife joins me in best regards to yours. How I wish you could step into this quaint old room, with its view of the stormy sky and the far mountains! Well—when we return—as I hope the Lord will let us—there shall be amends for much absence. Meantime, don't forget

Your faithful friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Several of the travesties mentioned in this letter are notably felicitous, and all of them are amusing. An imitation that he wrote of Longfellow was not printed, as he feared, needlessly, that Longfellow would be hurt by it and would take offence. It is a parody on "The Psalm of Life," and it gives the reverie of a pensive moralist, in a farm-yard. Taylor, in his mood of boyish frolic, once repeated it to me. This is the first stanza:

O'er the fragile rampart leaning,
Which enclosed the herd of swine,
Thoughts of vast and wondrous meaning
Flitted through this brain of mine.

And then the philosophic bard, observing the selfish conduct of the porkers,—how the larger ones contend for place at the trough, and how the

smaller ones are pushed off and trodden down,—perceives an obvious analogy to the conduct of human beings, and melodiously sets forth that thus it is in human life.

Taylor's finest poem, in sublimity of theme, grandeur of conception, and spontaneity of rhythmical eloquence, is "The Masque of the Gods." The cherished copy of it that he sent to me is inscribed: "To William Winter, from his old friend Bayard Taylor. New York, May 30, 1872." The words that he provides for Apollo to speak express himself:

> Mine the simpler task
> To build one bridge that reaches to the sky,
> To teach one truth that brings eternal joy,
> And from the imperfect world the promise wrest
> Of one perfection. If than this Man needs
> A broader hope, a loftier longing, yet
> This he must have; bereft of it he dies.
> He cannot feed on cold, ascetic dreams,
> And mutilate the beauty of the world
> For something far and shapeless: he must give
> His eyes the form of what in him aspires,
> His ears the sound of that diviner speech
> He pines to speak, his soul the proud content
> Of having touched the skirts of perfect things.

In special reference to this poem, Taylor wrote to me a characteristic letter, eloquent equally of

his affectionate heart and his wonderfully enthusiastic spirit:

Irving House, N. Y., May 28, 1872.

My dear, true Winter:

. . . I hope you'll like the Masque, for it is certainly the best thing I've yet done. The fact of your liking Iris convinces me that you will. I feel that I am only just now getting command of my true speech in poetry. I have always had faith in the Art of Song, a faith as intense as that of an early Christian martyr. I never look back more than a year over my finished work, but always forward, and always occupy my fancy with the new and half-formed conceptions.

I think I feel more actual poetic "frenzy" now than ever before in my life, and I can only attribute it to the steady drudgery, for years, which now enables me to move freely in all rhythmical shackles, so that the form of poetry is a servant to the mind, not a master, as at first.

This, with the equally religious faith that a devotion to art, unshaken by the criticism, the whims, or the tastes of the day, will surely reward the believer, in the end, is all the explanation I can give. The trouble is not with our poetical conceptions: we all have them: but we must conquer language and rhythm and forms of thought before we can represent them with the freedom and symmetry of life.

Since I have reached this conviction I am happy. The Masque is a dead failure, *as a publication:* the sale is only about 600 copies: but I do not care one whit. I feel that I have advanced, and (so far as one can judge of himself) on the true path. I will follow it, though I starve.

I take a certain amount of mechanical hack work, in order to buy the rest of my time for myself, and I mean to use

that hard-bought time to do *my own work*. If good, it *will* be recognized, some time: if bad, it ought to perish.

Meantime, one must have some support and encouragement, and I have enough in the sympathy of a few friends and poets like yourself. You are *not*, and never will be, a failure to me: I find in you the same higher and finer laws of Art which I am trying to make my own. . . . Remember that I shall always be, as I am now, most faithfully and affectionately your friend.

BAYARD TAYLOR.

The year 1876 was, in the general mind of the American Republic, convalescent after the disease and anguish of hideous civil war, a year of amity and reconciliation. It brought the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and it stimulated, throughout the country, a joyous impulse to exult in the triumph of popular government and to celebrate the growth and prosperity of the nation. A jubilee was ordained, to occur in Philadelphia, on the Fourth of July, and Taylor was asked to participate in it, as the poet of that national occasion. He appreciated the honor and he accepted the duty. The Society of the Army of the Potomac, meanwhile, had arranged for its annual reunion to be held in the same city, in the month of June, and

he had promised to be present and to deliver a poem. At that time Taylor and I were neighbors, dwelling in houses almost opposite each other, in East Eighteenth Street, New York, and, as we were also colleagues in "The New York Tribune," our meetings were frequent; and when we did not meet we sometimes exchanged notes.

On April 7 he wrote to me: "I have at last hung a string into my dissolved conceptions, and the alum of the Ode is slowly beginning to crystallize upon it." The formidable occasion was then distant less than three months, and now he began to consider that he might not be able to produce two poems, of a patriotic character, responsive to the requirements of two occasions occurring so closely together, and he asked me to relieve him of one of those engagements. This I agreed to do, and the result was that the Society of the Army of the Potomac invited me to be its poet in that jubilee year, and Taylor was left free to concentrate his thoughts upon the magnificent Ode, with which, on the Fourth of July, standing in front of Independence Hall, he

electrified a vast multitude and gained for himself a laurel that never can fade: for there is no other poem that so fully and so eloquently expresses the central thought of American civilization and the passionate enthusiasm for liberty by which that civilization is permeated and sustained.

Taylor's memory of the Centennial Celebration, and of his own brilliant achievement, was expressed to me, in the following letter, written three days after the delivery of the Ode:

142 East 18th Street, N. Y., July 7, 1876.

My Dear Winter:

I found your whole-hearted note of congratulation at the office this morning. It is one of *five* already received, and all of the same cheering strain. You don't know—but, yes, *you* do!—how comforting and encouraging is such recognition.

As for myself, I don't know how it was, nor can I yet understand,—but I did what I never saw done before, and certainly shall never do again: thousands of common people were silenced, then moved, then kindled into a flame, *by Poetry!* It was this grand instinctive feeling of *the mass* which amazed me most.

I must tell you all about it when we meet: I cannot now. I am suffering the natural reaction after such an immense nervous tension. But let spite and disparagement do their worst! They *can't* take away from me the memory of that half-hour!

Perhaps I shall see you to-morrow. I am tired and overworked (having written five leaders and a column of reviews this week, besides the Fourth), and can't go up to you for a few days yet. . . .

Thank you, over and over again, dear old fellow!

Ever yours faithfully,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Our meeting, which presently occurred, was a jovial one, and great was our enjoyment in recounting to each other the incidents of our experience as patriotic bards. Taylor's delight in the triumphant success of his Ode was almost pathetic in its childlike ecstasy of happiness.

Neither of us had any reason for regret. The poem that I wrote for the Society of the Army of the Potomac and delivered at the Philadelphia Academy of Music is called "The Voice of the Silence,"—its intention being to indicate the admonitions that proceed out of the tranquillity of Nature, in places, now silent and peaceful, that have been tumultuous and horrible with strife, and, incidentally, to declare that there is active spiritual impartment in the seeming quiescent physical world. The scene, as I recall it, presented a superb pageant of life and color.

There was a multitudinous audience. The stage was thronged with men renowned in war and eminent in peace. General Hancock presided. My seat was at the left of that commander, and on my left sat General Sherman. I had not before met those famous chieftains, and presently I obtained an amusing assurance that we had indeed been strangers. General Hancock was visibly suffering from nervous trepidation, as he inspected the printed order of exercises and prepared to begin the proceedings.

"From New York, sir?" he said, turning to me, in a bewilderment of inquiry. Almost at the same moment General Sherman, who also was inspecting the programme,—but with a bland composure curiously contrastive with his military colleague's excitement,—smote me upon the shoulder and cheerfully inquired: "Do I understand that this is *a poem of your own composition* that you intend to deliver?" Reassured by a favorable reply as to both those points, the warriors seemed to accept the situation, and the speaking was begun.

I have addressed many audiences, but never an

audience more eagerly responsive and generously enthusiastic than that assemblage of members of the Society of the Army of the Potomac. When I returned to my seat, after the delivery of my poem, every person upon the stage was standing; the house was ringing with cheers; General Sherman caught me in his arms, with fervent feeling: and, as to the success of the effort, it is enough for me to remember that, from that day till the day of his death, that great man remained my friend.

Themes of ardor and scenes of tumult were, to Bayard Taylor, the breath of life. No other American poet has surpassed and only Halleck and Whittier have equalled him in the quality of passionate, ecstatic *enthusiasm,* as it is shown in his "Bedouin Song," his "Nilotic Drinking Song," his "Song of the Camp," his "Sicilian Wine," his "Porphyrogenitus," his "Shakespeare Ode," and "The Bath." Those are typical exponents of a spirit that was forever aspiring, forever hopeful, always feeling the impulse and sounding the exultant note of joyous endeavor:

WILLIAM WINTER
(In 1876)

Turn not where sinks the sullen dark
Before the signs of warning,
But crowd the canvas on our bark
And sail to meet the morning.

Writing to me from Gotha, Germany, October 2, 1873, he gave this revelation of his indomitable mind:

I have been, until recently, so busy with a History of Germany, for schools, that my purpose to write to you has been postponed until now. . . . I was compelled to undertake the History, for the sake of bread and butter. It was a work of eight months, severe and unremitting, and if it does not have a tolerable success I shall infer that *no* literary work of mine is destined to succeed. "Lars," for instance, is a dead failure, in a business point of view. The sales, for the first two months, were just 1,050 copies.

I believe the book has been praised by the critics (at least Osgood says so), but it seems to have made no impression on most of my friends. McEntee is the sole individual who has mentioned it in his letters. Stedman wrote such praise of my Vienna Letters (the most ephemeral work) as would have seemed ironical from any but an old friend, without even hinting that he had ever heard of a poem which is worth all my correspondence, from first to last.

However, I am one of those tough souls which cannot be changed either by censure or neglect. I shall go on writing until I either receive the right sort of recognition or am smothered to death under a pyramid of magnificent failures. I have an intense joy and satisfaction in writing a poem, and I never could write so fast as to get ahead of

the accumulating conceptions. A nice prospect for my friends!

I go to Weimar in about a week, to study the Goethe archives and the localities generally. Gotha, therefore, will be my address until Christmas: it is only one hour from Weimar. Our winter plan is still in nubibus; but there is no hurry. Next summer there is the return home, and any amount of sordid drudgery for me. . . .

I'm getting a little homesick, for the absence, thus far, has been anything but a holiday. I've been fifteen months in Europe, and in that time have compiled a volume for Scribner, written "Lars" and a "History of Germany," and gone to Vienna for the Tribune. The remaining six or eight months of our stay must be devoted to the Goethe plan, for which, principally, I came.

Lillian is still at school, developing in a way which gladdens our hearts; so the main fortune of life has not yet deserted us. How are your wife and boys? Give them our love, and whenever you have an hour to "loaf and invite your soul" tell me how you are getting on. . . .

There, you are tired of this, and I'll stop. If there were a seashore here I'd wander on it, and look over the waves like Iphigenia in Tauris. But I'm not the less an exile.

Ever faithfully yours,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

On another occasion, writing to me from the same German city, he said:

MY DEAR WINTER:

Your letter of Nov. 11 came like an unexpected and therefore-all-the-more-welcome visit into my German solitude here.

But, good Heavens! what all has not happened since then! I write now, in a state of the greatest confusion and uncertainty,—a condition during which we ought really not to write at all,—but I cannot foresee how soon it will end. Greeley's death is a severe blow to me; for, in spite of many little personal squabbles (for which he never showed me the least sensitiveness), he was one of my best friends, one of the few to be *always* relied upon, one upon whom I counted in forecasting the future. . . .

My new poem has been my great consolation, and now that it is finished I miss the diversion of mind sadly. It is a blank verse idyllic story, in three books—something over 2,100 lines. The MS. has gone to Osgood, by mail, and I have made another copy for Strahan & Co., London, who, to my surprise, are willing to publish it. I hope their confidence will not be shamed by the result. I can only say that it is quite unlike anything I have yet done: it is quaint, simple, unhistorical, objectively expressed. The story, which is all mine own invention, seemeth to me good; it is certainly original. All this will not make the poem popular. I have come to the conclusion that popularity depends on striking some transitory mood or whim of the mercurial public; hence I expect nothing from this venture, except what an interest in the mere story may give. But it will be pleasant if my friends take an interest in the bantling. . . .

I had a new experience last week. I lectured, in German, on American Literature, for the benefit of the Ladies' Charitable Association of the city. My friends were a little nervous, but the experiment was a thorough success. The hall was crammed: the ladies made over one hundred thalers profit: and everybody seemed delighted. I read, among other things, a translation of Poe's Raven and a poem of

Whittier, both of which seemed to make a strong impression. I wrote the Lecture immediately in German, and—to my surprise—have received many compliments on account of its *style*. This "occupation, that never wearies, that slowly creates and destroys not," as Schiller says, is, after all, our best refuge in uneasy times.

Stedman has just written, in his old, hearty way, and I shall reply to-morrow. Reid speaks of his poem, on Greeley, being very fine, which makes me all the more regret that the papers have not come. I have sent also some lines, written during the first shock of the news: they have probably been published by this time.

I don't know of any poem, anywhere, called "The Veiled Muse." I like the title: why didn't you send me a copy of the poem? As for your poetic activity, this poem proves that you have not given up. I know the despondency under which you are resting, but also I know that the congenital gift never dies out of one's nature. *Several* volumes of mine sell no longer; not five copies a year; but am I to be silent because of that? Never, my masters! If I live I shall publish several more volumes of poetry. What is in me must out, whether the public like it or not!

You will surely write again soon. I shall, probably, from all quarters, not hear a full account of what has taken place in the office since Greeley's death, and you can certainly give me a little more light on the situation, from your point of view. Now I must close, to catch to-day's mail. With hearty greetings to all friends,

Ever faithfully yours,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Of the poetic group in which Taylor was conspicuous not one remains. That group included, among others, Richard Henry Stoddard and his brilliant wife, Elizabeth Barstow; Edmund Clarence Stedman; George Henry Boker; Fitz-James O'Brien; Christopher P. Cranch; Fitz Hugh Ludlow, and George William Curtis. The writings of Taylor evince his strong affection for Boker and Stoddard. The home of the latter poet, where I first met Taylor, was, for several years, in a house, still standing, at the northeast corner of Fourth Avenue and Tenth Street, New York. There, on occasion, Stoddard,—the most subtle and exquisite lyrical genius in our poetic literature since Poe,—would assemble his guests, and there I have seen Taylor, as also at his own fireside and at mine, the incarnation of joviality and the soul of mirth. He was in no way ascetic. He loved the pleasures of life. No man could more completely obey than he did the Emersonian injunction to "Hear what wine and roses say!" In the earlier part of his career he had fancied himself a disciple of Shelley: there is, among his works,

an ode to that elusive poet, whom he invokes as "Immortal brother"; but, in fact, he had as little natural sympathy with the rainbow mysticism of that strange being as he had with his proclivity for dry bread. He would have consorted far more readily with Burns or Christopher North, "the jolly bachelors of Tarbolton and Mauchline" (as Allan Cunningham called Burns's gay comrades), or the genial revellers of the Noctes Ambrosianæ. Not that he fancied carousal: but he was very human. Like Shelley, however, he loved Grecian themes: his "Icarus," "Hylas" and "Passing the Sirens" are fine imaginative examples of that love; but, like Burns, he habitually treated all themes in a spirit of ardent humanity.

Neither Taylor, Stoddard, Stedman, nor Boker was associated with the Bohemian group that gathered round the satiric Henry Clapp, in the days of "The Saturday Press" and Pfaff's Cave. None of those poets led a Bohemian life or evinced practical sympathy with what is called Bohemianism. Stedman, indeed, wrote a poem about Bohemia,—a poem which is buoyant with

a gypsy spirit and a winning lilt; but it is one thing to write melodious verses about Arcadian bliss, and quite another thing to subsist from week to week on the precarious rations of a publisher's hack. Taylor, roaming up and down the world,—as Goldsmith had done before him,—learning languages, consorting with all sorts of persons, and earning his bread with his pen, possessed the true Bohemian spirit; but, all the same, his tastes were domestic, his proclivities were those of the scholar and the artist, and he typifies not Grub Street, but literature; and in literature he especially represents the rare and precious attribute of poetic vitality; for his many-colored line throbs and glows with life,—not alone the life of the intellect, but the life of the heart.

It is difficult to depict, in the cold gleam of words, the inspiring personality of Bayard Taylor and to indicate its value to the general experience. As I think of him I see again the tall, stalwart figure; the symmetrical head, with its crown of dark, slightly grizzled, curling hair; the aquiline, bearded face; the dark eyes, glowing with kindly light; and again I feel the cordial

clasp of the strong hand, and hear the cheerful, musical, winning voice. In the common life of every day he was the genial comrade, enjoying everything and happy in contributing to the happiness around him. In the life of the intellect, in the realm of thought and expression, he became transfigured; he was the priest at the altar, the veritable apostle of Art. There is, in the crypt of the Pantheon, in Paris, a tomb, of which the door stands partly open, to allow the passage of an arm of bronze, bearing an uplifted torch,—the emblem of immortal aspiration. No symbol could better denote the personality of Bayard Taylor, the meaning of his life, and the abiding influence of his works. Upon his grave, at Longwood, Pennsylvania, there is a Greek altar, inscribed with the words, "He being dead yet speaketh." It is not an idle epitaph. As long as there is beauty in the world, and as long as there are human hearts to receive its message of joy and hope, his voice will be heard.

VII.

CHARLES DICKENS

It was my privilege, many years ago, to clasp the hand of Charles Dickens and to hear from his lips the cordial assurance of his personal regard. "If you come to England," he said, "be sure to come to *me;* and it won't be my fault if you don't have a good time." The great novelist said those words as we sat together aboard a little tug-boat, on the morning of April 22, 1868, steaming to the Russia, which was anchored in the bay of New York, and about to sail for England. It was a lovely morning. The air was genial, the broad expanse of the Hudson and the bay sparkled in brilliant sunlight, and the whole silver scene was vital with motion and cheerful sound. Dickens had expressed the wish to slip away unimpeded by a crowd, for his many Readings, together with much travel and continuous social exertion, had taxed his endurance, and he

was weary and ill. Accordingly, accompanied by his friend and manager, George Dolby, he drove from his hotel, the Westminster, to the pier at the western end of Spring Street, where a few friends were to meet him and embark with him for the steamship. The party included James T. Fields, James R. Osgood, Sol Eytinge, Jr., A. V. S. Anthony, H. C. Jarrett, H. D. Palmer, George Dolby, and the present writer,—who is the sole survivor of that group. When Dickens alighted from the carriage and glanced at the river he uttered the joyous exclamation: "That's *home!*" We were soon aboard the tug-boat,—called "The Only Son,"—and as we sailed down the river it pleased the novelist to talk with me about many things. I had heard all his Readings in New York, and had written about them, and on that subject he had many pleasant words to say. Mention being made of the English poet Matthew Arnold, he spoke warmly, saying: "He is one of the gentlest and most earnest of men." Of the renowned foreign actor Charles Fechter,—who had not visited America, but was soon to come,—he said: "When you see

Fechter you will, I think, recognize a great artist." So the talk rambled on, till presently I ventured to speak of the benefit and comfort that I, in common with thousands of other readers, had derived from his novels. My favorite, in those days, was "A Tale of Two Cities," and in a fervor of enthusiasm I declared to him the opinion that it is the greatest of his works. He seemed much pleased, and he answered, with evident conviction: "I think so too!" Study and thought, in years that since have passed, convince me that we were both somewhat mistaken, for the indisputable supremacy of Dickens is that of the humorist, and surely the foremost of his novels, in respect of humor, are "David Copperfield" and "Martin Chuzzlewit"; but the avowal he then made affords an interesting glimpse of his mind, and therefore it is worthy to be remembered.

The humorist not infrequently undervalues his special gift, and fancies himself to be stronger in pathos than in mirth. Dickens, as shown by many denotements in his writings, was fond of melodrama, meaning the drama of astonishing

situations,—a branch of art by no means to be despised, but not the highest,—and he liked positive, literal effects rather than suggestions to the imagination: it is known, for example, that he ranked the performance of *Solon Shingle,* by John E. Owens, which was reality, above the performance of *Rip Van Winkle,* by Joseph Jefferson, which, in that actor's treatment of it, was poetry. No critical considerations, however, affected our discourse, in the conversation that is now recalled. The novelist had labored through a toilsome season: his work was done, his mind was at ease, and he was blithe in spirits,—only subdued, at moments, by consciousness of impending separation from dear friends. There was about him the irresistible charm of ingenuous demeanor and absolute simplicity. His appearance, that day, afforded a striking contrast with the appearance he had presented at the reading desk. When before an audience Dickens assumed the pose of an actor. He wore evening dress, but he used the accessories of footlights and also a colored screen as a background, and he " made up " his face, as actors do. There

was, in his reading, an extraordinary facility of impersonation, and he employed all essential means to heighten the desired effect of it. Now he was himself. The actor had disappeared. The man was with us, unsophisticated and unadorned. He wore a rough travelling suit and a soft felt hat; his right foot was wrapped in black silk, for he had been suffering from gout; and he carried a plain stick. After he had boarded the steamship, and while he was talking with the captain and other officers, the members of our little party assembled in the saloon with what he afterward jocosely described as "bitter beer intentions." Soon he approached our group and, addressing me, he said: "What are you drinking?" I named the fluid, and, responding to his request, filled a tumbler for him. He shook hands with us, all around, with a grasp of iron, emptied his glass, put it on the table, and turned to greet the old statesman Thurlow Weed, who had just then arrived: whereupon, immediately, I seized that glass, and, to the consternation of the attendant steward, put it into my pocket,—mentioning, as I did so, Sir Wal-

ter Scott's appropriation of the glass of King George IV, at the civic feast in Edinburgh, long ago. The royal souvenir, it is recorded, fared ill, for Sir Walter sat upon it and broke it. The Dickens souvenir survives and is still in my possession. When the farewells had been spoken and we had left the ship, Dickens stood at the rail, his brilliant eyes (and surely no eyes more brilliant were ever seen) suffused with tears, and, placing his hat on the end of his stick, he waved it to us till distance had hidden him from view. I never saw him again. Nine years later, in 1877, when I first went to England, though I could not seek for him at his home, I stood with reverence beside his grave. He rests in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. As I drew near to that sacred spot I saw a single red rose lying on the pavement that bears his name, and almost at the instant a heedless visitor, indolently strolling along the transept, trod upon the flower and crushed it.

The general heart of mankind was touched by Charles Dickens. Criticism, in its examination of his writings, may refine and discriminate to

POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

the utmost possible extent, but it cannot obliterate that solid, decisive truth. His own words tersely and convincingly declare the consummate, conquering principles of his faith and his works:

> Ages of incessant labor, by immortal creatures, for this earth, must pass into eternity, before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. . . . Any Christian spirit, working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. . . . There is nothing in the world so inevitably contagious as laughter and good humor.

Upon those principles Dickens continuously acted, and in his literary life, of more than thirty years of conscientious labor, he created enduring works of art,—peopling the realm of pure fiction with a wide variety of characters, interpreting human nature in manifold phases, reflecting the passing hour, demolishing social abuses, teaching the sacred duty of charity, comforting and helping the poor, and stretching forth the hands of loving sympathy to the outcast and the wretched. Thus laboring, he enriched the world with a perpetual spring of kindness, of hope, and of innocent, happy laughter; he inculcated devotion to

noble ideals; and he stimulated and strengthened the spiritual instincts of the human race. Any relic of such a man is precious, and the Dickens souvenir to which I have adverted,—the glass from which he took his parting drink, on the day of his final departure from America,—has been tenderly cherished. Once in a while it is brought forth and shown, for the pleasure of a literary visitor. On one occasion of exceptional and peculiar interest, when Charles Dickens, the younger, dined with us in our home, March 3, 1883, it was placed in his hands, and thus, after the lapse of fifteen years, the farewell glass of the illustrious father was touched by the lips of the reverent and honored son.

The younger Charles Dickens, a man of uncommon talents and of a singularly amiable and winning personality, possessed abundant and deeply interesting recollections of his father, and, naturally, he was fond of talking about him. Adverting to his father's Readings, he mentioned several picturesque and significant incidents, all tending to show the deep interest that the great novelist felt in that branch of his art,

and the scrupulous care with which he trained himself for the vocation of public reader. The home of Dickens, Gad's Hill Place, a house that he had known and fancied when a boy, and that he bought in 1856, is near to Rochester and Chatham, where there is a military and naval establishment. "Noisy brawls sometimes occurred in the neighborhood," said the younger Dickens, "but we did not regard them. One morning I heard a great din, shouts and screams, as of a violent, drunken quarrel. At first I did not heed it, but after a while, as it steadily continued, I went out to our grove, across the road, where I found my father, alone. 'Have you heard the row?' I asked. 'Did you hear any noise?' he answered. 'Yes,' I replied, 'I thought somebody was being killed. What can have happened? Did *you* shout?' '*I* made the row,' he replied; 'I have been rehearsing the murder scene in "Oliver Twist." It was the wrangle of Bill Sykes and Nancy that you heard; I have just been trying to kill Nancy.' 'Well,' I said, 'I should think you have succeeded, for a more damnable racket was never made.'" The ear-

nest narrator proceeded to tell me that his father was warned against the prodigious exertion necessitated by those Readings of his, and especially by the reading from "Oliver Twist." The death of Dickens (aged only fifty-eight) was precipitated by his implication in a frightful railroad accident, which occurred at Staplehurst, a year before he died, but, undoubtedly, the efforts that he made as a public reader hastened the close of his great career. Indeed, toward the last, his son Charles, acting in obedience to the imperative order of his father's doctor, invariably sat in front, near to the stage, and,—as he told me,—had, privately, provided himself with a short ladder, by means of which he could obtain immediate access to the platform, in order to aid his father in case he should be smitten with a stroke of apoplexy. Such an end was expected, and such was the end that came; but, happily, not in public. Dickens gave his last reading on March 19, 1869, at St. James's Hall, London. He died, suddenly, of apoplexy, in his dining room at Gad's Hill Place, June 9, 1870. The younger Charles Dickens long survived his father, dying on July

21, 1896,—and so one of the kindest men, one of the gentlest spirits, one of the best speakers in England, vanished from our mortal scene.

The name of the Dickens house and of its locality is spelled both ways—Gad's Hill and Gadshill. In the second act of the First Part of Shakespeare's great play of "Henry IV" it is spelled Gadshill, and it is used as the name of a place and as the name of a person,—the servant of *Falstaff*. The place is westward from Rochester. On a brilliant day in the summer of 1885 I made a pilgrimage to that literary shrine,—driving from the Bull, at Rochester, Mr. Pickwick's tavern, and passing many hours among the haunts of Dickens. There is, or was, a quaint little inn, called the Falstaff, near to Gad's Hill Place, on the opposite side of the turnpike road, and from that resort I dispatched a card to the owner of the mansion, Major ——, signifying that one of the American friends of Dickens would gratefully appreciate the privilege of viewing the house. The Major received me with cordial hospitality, and so it happened that a stranger spoke, upon the threshold of Dickens,

the welcome that the great author himself intended and promised to speak. There was the study, unchanged,—the room in which "Great Expectations," "Our Mutual Friend" and "Edwin Drood" were written; there was the writing-desk at which the magician would never sit again; there was the vacant chair; there, on the back of the door, was the painted book-case, with the mock volumes, bearing comic titles, invented by the novelist; and over all the golden summer sunshine glimmered and a magic light of memory that words are powerless to paint. I sat in the chair of Charles Dickens and reverently wrote my name in the chronicle of pilgrims to his earthly home. The dining room had, on that day, been prepared for a banquet for many persons, but no guests had yet arrived, and the Major kindly permitted me to enter it and see the sofa on which Dickens died; and later he conducted me through a tunnel underneath the road, giving access to a field and grove where was the Swiss chalet presented to Dickens by friends of his in Switzerland, a snug retreat to which he often resorted to escape interruption when at

work, and where he passed his last day as a living man. I recalled his words, as I stood there: "If you come to England be sure to come to *me*," and it seemed to me that he was actually present, and that I felt again the hearty grasp of his hand and heard the ringing tones of his cheery voice. The garden was gay with red roses. "Dickens loved these," said the Major, and, so saying, he placed a cluster of them in my hands, by way of gracious farewell.

THE READINGS OF DICKENS

Dickens was not only an excellent reader but a good actor. The discerning reader of his novels perceives that he possessed a keen dramatic instinct. The auditor of his Readings was soon convinced that he also possessed a positive dramatic faculty. In reading scenes from his novels he entered into characters that he had created, and his correct assumption of diverse personalities was decisively effective. Now he was *Scrooge;* presently *Mr. Fizgig;* then *Bob Cratchitt;* and by and by he passed, easily, by the expedient of artistic suggestion,—and by

something more, which it is difficult to define,—through the contrasted guises of *Serjeant Buzfuz,* the little *Judge, Mrs. Cluppins, Sam Weller, Mr. Winkle, Micawber, Pecksniff,* and *Sairey Gamp.* The skill that merges personality with a fictitious character, and yet does not efface the performer's individual quality, is indispensable in acting. Dickens possessed it. He knew the effect that he wished to produce. His method was characterized by simplicity and delicacy. In the copious, mellow, musical vocalism (a little marred by the monotony of rising inflection), the authoritative manner, the unaffected, free gesticulation, and the spontaneous accordance of the action with the word the authentic art of the actor was conspicuous. As an interpreter of tragic character and feeling he was consistent and often impressive, as in his reading of the storm chapter, much condensed, in "David Copperfield,"—that wonderful blending of the terrors of the tempest with the tragic and pathetic culminations of human fate,—but he was, distinctively, a humorist, and his humorous embodiments, for embodiments, practically, they were,

and not merely denotements, were his indubitable triumphs of dramatic art. In outbursts of passionate emotion, while he did not lack fervor, he lacked vocal power; but the moment he entered the realm of humor he was a monarch. His whole being then seemed aroused. His clear, brilliant, expressive eyes twinkled with joy; his countenance expressed bubbling mirth that was with difficulty restrained; his tones grew deep and rich; he, manifestly, escaped from all consciousness of self; and he completely captivated his auditor.

At this distance of time,—forty years having passed since last I heard his voice,—it is not easy to name his superlative comic achievements; but my clearest remembrance of them would specify *Micawber, Mrs. Gamp, Sam Weller, Mrs. Raddles, Pecksniff, Mrs. Gummidge* and the little servant of *Bob Sawyer* as gems of his humorous acting. There was a sweet, gentle strain of humor in his exposition of the delicate episode of poor little *Dora Spenlow;* but the scenes in which he revelled and greatly excelled were such as display the festival with *Micawber* at Canter-

bury; the supper with *Bob Sawyer,* in the lodging-house of the shrill, spiteful *Mrs. Raddles;* and the tipsy altercation between *Mrs. Gamp* and *Mrs. Prig.* His finest impersonations,—finest, because of the dramatic interpreter's absolute fidelity to the author's designs, and also because of their integral revealment of his genius,—were, as I remember them, those of *Dr. Marigold* and *Mrs. Gamp.* The latter portrayal was a consummate type of his humor; the former of his pathos. That fat, fussy heathen, that prodigy of eccentric, comic selfishness, that ungainly, sagacious, piggish cockney, *Mrs. Gamp,*—herself possessing no perception, however slight, of either good feeling or mirth,—delights by the grotesque comicality of a character, both serious and ludicrous, which is skilfully developed and displayed under ingeniously humorous conditions. All lovers of broad fun have rejoiced in *Sairey,*—in her copious loquacity, her store of anecdote, her appropriate aphorisms, her belief in the utility of regular habits, her talent for sarcasm, her partiality for gin, her naïve suggestion of " a bottle on the chimbley-piece, to set to my

lips when so dispoged," her ample resources of unconsciously ludicrous illustration, her fecund, inexhaustible vocabulary, her mythical friend *Mrs. Harris,* her formidable compatriot *Betsy Prig,* and her ever memorable quarrel with that audacious associate. Dickens must have rejoiced in creating *Mrs. Gamp,* for he evinced the keenest artistic enjoyment in depicting her,—his portrayal of her exemplifying absolute harmony between the imaginative ideal and the executive intellectual purpose. Our stage was adorned, in old times, by three comedians, George Holland, William Davidge, and Marie Wilkins, any of whom could have personated *Mrs. Gamp* perfectly well; but none of them, though aided by the accessories of costume and scenery, could have made the character more actual to the material vision than Dickens made it to the eyes of the mind. He read it, and, at the same time, he contrived to act it.

The same felicity of achievement was perceptible in the portrayal of *Dr. Marigold.* No other one of his Readings contained more—if so much —of himself. In whatsoever way interpreted,

the story of *Dr. Marigold* would touch the heart. As interpreted by Dickens, its harmony of humor and pathos was irresistible. The sketch itself is exceptionally representative of the essential characteristic of its author's genius—vital humanity. No writer has shown himself more capable than Dickens was of pointing those afflicting contrasts which reveal human nature as, at times, so noble, and social conditions as, at times, so tragic. No writer ever was more quick to see or more expert to show the heart that beats beneath the motley, and, therewithal, the masquerade of living, in which so many human beings, of fine feeling and high motive, are doomed to participate,—often through many arid years of smiling endurance. When Dickens assumed *Dr. Marigold* the formal English gentleman, in evening dress, seemed to disappear, while in his place stood the coarsely clad, loquacious pedler, on the footboard of his Cheap-Jack cart,—his dying daughter clasped to his breast, her arms around his neck, her head drooping on his shoulder,—vending his wares—voluble, facetious, resolute—hiding his sorrow—the veritable incarnation of heroism—even while

the gray shadow of death was stealing over the face of his child. It was an inexpressibly pathetic presentment of dramatic contrast: on one side, self-abnegation, the celestial element of human nature; on the other side, innocent, helpless, forlorn childhood, made doubly sacred by misfortune. I have seen all the important acting that has been shown on the American stage within a past of more than fifty years: I have seen but little, in the serio-comic vein, that was better than that of Charles Dickens in the character of *Dr. Marigold.* This humble tribute can suggest only the general character of his art. His Readings were the spontaneous expression, wisely guided, of a great nature, in the maturity of its greatness, and those persons who heard them enjoyed a precious privilege, never to be forgotten.

Contemporary interest in those Readings, no doubt, was intensified by admiration,—then very general,—of the reader's writings; and perhaps, by reason of that admiration, they seem, in remembrance, to have been finer than they actually were. I do not, however, credit that conjecture. I recall, even now, the action of Dick-

ens when, as *Bob Cratchitt,* he seemed to be throwing a kiss to *Tiny Tim,* and brushing away a tear, as he prepared to propose the health of *Scrooge.* Those persons only who have children and fear to lose them, or, loving them, have lost them, could understand how much that simple action meant. I recall his sad tones and direct way when, as *Pegotty,* he told of the weary search for *Little Em'ly,* and " the fine, massive grandeur in his face " when he spoke those touching words: " And only God knows how good them mothers was to me." I remember the exalted, awe-stricken expression of his countenance when, as he closed his narrative of the storm, in " Copperfield," he spoke of the dead man, whose name is unmentioned, and the pathetic tone in which he said: " I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school." Those indescribably beautiful strokes of art, and many like them, denoted a consummate artist. It is not, however, to be questioned that the intrinsic power and authentic supremacy of Dickens consisted in authorship, and not in the histrionic illustration of it. He enriched litera-

ture with creations that can never perish. Humor and pathos blend in his works and make an exquisite music. The geniality of Christmas is nowhere so fully expressed as in "Pickwick" and the "Carol,"—where great fires blaze upon spacious hearths, and bright eyes sparkle, and merry bells ring, and sunshine, starlight, and joy make a delicious atmosphere of comfort, kindness, and ardent good-will. There is no terror more ghastly than that on the face of *Jonas Chuzzlewit,* as he breaks out of the woods, after doing the murder. There is no written tempest more actual and terrible than the tempest in which *Ham* and *Steerforth* go to their death. There is no emblem of self-sacrifice more sublime than the figure of *Sidney Carton* at the guillotine. But it is only a glimpse of a great author that is here intended,—not a critical estimate of works long since accepted into the sacrarium of English Literature. The world knows them by heart, and the judgment of the most exacting of human intellect has recognized and celebrated the scope and the opulence of their writer's genius: the vitality of his thought; the sincerity of his

virtuous emotion; the certainty of his intuition; the felicity of his inventive skill; the rosy glow of his copious, captivating humor; the fineness of his perception of tragic and comic contrast in human experience; the depth of his sympathy with the common joys and sorrows of the human race; the eloquence of his fluent, nervous, forcible, convincing style; and the profound, steadfast, consistent purpose of his life and his art to inculcate the religion of charity and love. The world is happier and better because Charles Dickens has lived in it.

VIII.

WILKIE COLLINS

THERE is no resemblance of organic structure and mental idiosyncrasy between the works of Charles Dickens and the works of Wilkie Collins, yet Collins, as a novelist, was a result of the prodigious influence of Dickens upon the literary movement of the time in which he lived, and the memory of the one irresistibly incites remembrance of the other. My acquaintance with Collins began long ago, and it speedily ripened into a friendship that was interrupted only by his death. He was a great writer: as a story-teller, specifically, he stands alone,—transcendent and incomparable: but his personality was even more interesting than his authorship. To be in his society was to be charmed, delighted, stimulated, and refreshed. His intellectual energy communicated itself to all around him, but his man-

ner was so exquisitely refined and gentle that, while he prompted extreme mental activity, he also diffused a lovely influence of repose. The hours that I passed in the company of Collins are remembered as among the happiest of my life. His views were unconventional,—the views of a man who had observed human nature and society widely and closely, and who thought for himself. His humor was playful. His perception of character was intuitive and unerring. He manifested, at all times, a delicate consideration for other persons, and his sense of kindness was instantaneous and acute. His learning was ample, but he made no parade of it. Sincerity and simplicity were the predominant attributes of his mind. He had seen much of the world, he possessed a copious store of anecdote, and his conversation was fluent, sprightly, and amusing, —the more attractive because of personal peculiarities that deepened the impression of his winning originality. His temperament was mercurial,—his moods alternating between exuberant glee and pensive gloom; but in society he was remarkable for the buoyancy of a youthful spirit,

and at all times he dominated himself and his circumstances with a calm, resolute will. In listening to his talk and in reading his novels I derived the impression that he was a fatalist. However that may be, he looked upon the human race with boundless charity. His sensibility was great; his intuition was infallible, and, in particular, his mental attitude toward women was that of ardent chivalry. He understood woman —her heroism, her magnificent virtues, her enthralling charms; he knew her faults also, and he did not hesitate to declare and reprove them; but his works abound with touches of tender sympathy with her trials and sufferings, and with lovely compassion for her infirmities and griefs. That exquisite humanity, combined with fine intellect and delicate, spontaneous humor, made companionship with Wilkie Collins an inestimable privilege and blessing. I have had the fortune of knowing, intimately, many distinguished persons: I have not known any person, distinguished or otherwise, whose society,—because of mental breadth, catholic taste, generous feeling, quick appreciation, intrinsic goodness, and sweet

courtesy,—was so entirely satisfying as that of Wilkie Collins.

The unjustifiable use of private letters, as an element in the biography of deceased persons, has been severely, and rightly, condemned. A judicious and correct use of such documents, however, can neither do injustice to the dead nor give offence to the living. Some of the letters that Collins addressed to me are more expressive than any description could be of his blithe alacrity of mind and his genial spirit. Here is one that pleasantly indicates those attributes and also,—announcing his allegiance to certain splendid ideals now somewhat out of fashion,—declares his literary taste:

90 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.
London, August 5, 1878.

My Dear Winter:

Your kind and friendly letter found me in a darkened room, suffering again from one of my attacks of rheumatic gout in the eyes. I am only now well enough to use my eyes and my pen once more, and I hasten to ask you to forgive me for a delay in writing to you which has been forced upon me, in the most literal sense of the word.

Let me get away from the disagreeable subject of myself and my illnesses, and beg you to accept my most sincere

thanks for the gift of your last volume of poems. My first renewal of the pleasure of reading is associated with your pages. I ought to warn you that I am an incorrigible heretic in the matter of modern poetry, of the sort that is now popular. I positively decline to let the poet preach to me or puzzle me. He is to express passion and sentiment, in language which is essentially intelligible as well as essentially noble and musical,—or I will have nothing to do with him. You will now not be surprised to hear that I delight in Byron and Scott, and, more extraordinary still, that I am a frequent reader even of Crabbe!

Having made my confession, I am sure you will believe I speak sincerely when I thank you for some hours of real pleasure, derived from your volume. Both in feeling and expression I find your poetry (to use a phrase which I don't much like, but which expresses exactly what I mean) "thoroughly sympathetic." "The Ideal," "A Dirge," and "Rosemary" are three among my chief favorites. I thank you again for them—and for all the rest.

I have been too completely out of the world to have any news to tell you. As to literature, we are in a sadly stagnant state in London. And as to the "British Theatre" the less (with one or two rare exceptions) said about it the better. Writing of the theatre, however, I am reminded that my "New Magdalen," Ada Cavendish, sails on the 24th, to try her fortune in the United States. She has, I think, more of the divine fire in her than any other living English actress of "Drama"—and she has the two excellent qualities of being always eager to improve and always ready to take advice in her art. I am really interested in her well-doing, and I am specially anxious to hear what *you* think of her. In the "Magdalen," and also in "Miss Gwilt" (a piece

altered, from my "Armadale," by Regnier—of the Théâtre Français—and myself), she has done things which electrified our English audiences. If you should be sufficiently interested in her to give her a word of advice in the art she will be grateful, and I shall be grateful too.

I am "bestowing my tediousness" on you without mercy, and my paper warns me that the time has come to say, for the present, Good-by. Let me come to an end by expressing a hope that you will give me another opportunity of proving myself a better correspondent. In the meantime, with all good wishes, believe me,

Ever yours,

WILKIE COLLINS.

When you see Mr. Jefferson pray remember me kindly to him.

Miss Ada Cavendish (Mrs. Frank A. Marshall) was an actress of exceptional beauty, talent, and charm. She first attracted attention on the London stage in 1863, as a performer in burlesque, and subsequently she gained distinction in comedy and tragedy,—acting in important dramas and winning fame by fine performances of Shakespeare's *Beatrice* and *Rosalind.* In 1873 she first impersonated *Mercy Merrick,* in Collins's play based on his novel "The New Magdalen"; and thereafter, until the end of her

career, she remained identified with those heroines of his creation, *Mercy Merrick* and *Miss Gwilt*. Her first appearance on the American stage was made at Wallack's Theatre, New York, on September 9, 1878, and to that incident Collins refers. He was fond of the stage, and his novels,—from several of which he derived plays,—are abundantly supplied with original dramatic incident. One of his effective dramas is based on "The Woman in White," with which Mr. Wybert Reeve, in the character of *Count Fosco*, traversed Great Britain, the United States, and Canada, acting *Fosco* more than fifteen hundred times. In the following letter Collins makes an instructive allusion to one of his plays, as viewed by one of the most interesting members of the stage of France, the brilliant, much lamented Aimée-Olympe Desclée (1836-'74):

90 Gloucester Place, Portman Square,
London, February 10, 1882.

My Dear Winter:

You were indeed happily inspired when you sent me that generous and sympathetic article in "The Tribune." Still

tormented by the gout, I forgot my troubles when I opened the newspaper, and felt the encouragement that I most highly value—I mean the encouragement that is offered to me by a brother-writer.

If what I hear of this last larcenous appropriation of my poor "Magdalen" be true, what an effort it must have been to *you* to give your attention, even for a few hours only, to dramatic work so immeasurably beneath your notice! How did you compensate your intelligence for this outrage offered to it by this latest "adapter" of ideas that do not belong to him? Did you disinfect your mind by reading, or writing,—or did you go to bed, and secure the sweet oblivion of sleep?

I wonder whether I ever told you of an entirely new view taken of "Magdalen" by the last of the great French actresses—Aimée Desclée. After seeing the piece in London she was eager to play, on her return to Paris—*Grace Roseberry!* "Develop the character a little more, in the last act," she said to me; "I will see that the play is thoroughly well translated into French—and I will make *Grace,* and not *Mercy Merrick,* the chief woman in the piece. Grace's dramatic position is magnificent: I feel it, to my fingers' ends. Wait and see!" She died, poor soul, a few months afterward, and *Grace Roseberry* will, I fear, never be properly acted *now.* Don't forget me, my dear Winter—and let me hear from you sometimes. I set no common value on your friendship and your good opinion.

Ever yours,

Wilkie Collins.

P.S. I address you as Mr. on this envelope. Our curiously common mock-title of Esquire is declared by Fenimore Cooper to be a species of insult, and even a violation of the

Constitution of the United States, when attached to the name of an American citizen. Is that great Master (shamefully undervalued by Americans of the present day!) right or wrong about Esq.? N.B. I have just been reading "The Deerslayer" for the *fifth* time.

On the occasion of my last meeting with Collins, which occurred at his house, No. 82 Wimpole St., near Cavendish Square, London, not long before his death (on September 23, 1889), we sat together from noon till after midnight, talking of many subjects,—men, women, books, opinions, feelings, and events,—and then, as often before, I had occasion to appreciate his copious knowledge, fine discernment, and vigorous, novel thought. At that time, and indeed throughout his later years, he was obliged, occasionally, to consume laudanum. He had originally been compelled to use that drug because of excruciating pain, caused by rheumatic gout in the eyes, and it had become to him, more or less, an indispensable anodyne. In the course of the evening that medicine was brought to him, and, naturally, he adverted to its properties and effects.

"My suffering was so great," he said, "when I was writing 'The Moonstone,' that I could not control myself and keep quiet. My cries and groans so deeply distressed my amanuensis, to whom I was dictating, that he could not continue his work, and had to leave me. After that I employed several other men, with the same result: no one of them could endure the strain. At last I engaged a young woman, stipulating that she must utterly disregard my sufferings and attend solely to my words. This she declared that she could and would do, and this, to my amazement (because the most afflicting of my attacks came upon me after her arrival), she indubitably and exactly did. I was blind with pain, and I lay on the couch writhing and groaning. In that condition and under those circumstances I dictated the greater part of 'The Moonstone.'"

Collins mentioned, I remember, that the accession of pain began at the point where Miss Clack is introduced into the narrative, so that the essentially humorous part of that fascinating story was composed by its indomitable author when

he was almost frenzied with physical torture. The art of the fabric, nevertheless, is perfect: the invention never flags; the playful, satirical humor, with its vein of veiled scorn for canting hypocrisy, meanness, and spite, flows on in a smooth, silver ripple of felicitous words, and the style is crystal clear. " Opium sometimes hurts," he said, that day, " but also, *sometimes,* it helps. In general, people know nothing about it." He then referred to the experience of Sir Walter Scott, in the enforced use of laudanum, when writing " The Bride of Lammermoor,"—an experience that is related in Lockhart's noble life of that great author.

Mention was made of Coleridge and of De Quincey, and of the elder Lord Lytton (Bulwer), all of whom had recourse to opium. " I very well remember the poet Coleridge," Collins said: " he often came to my father's house, and my father and mother were close friends of his. One day he came there and was in great distress, saying that it was wrong for him to take opium, but that he could not resist the craving for it, although he made every possible effort to

do so. His grief was excessive. He even shed tears. At last my mother addressed him, saying: 'Mr. Coleridge, do not cry; if the opium really does you any good, and you *must* have it, why do you not go and get it?' At this the poet ceased to weep, recovered his composure, and, turning to my father, said, with an air of much relief and deep conviction: 'Collins, your wife is an exceedingly sensible woman!' I suppose that he did not long delay to act upon my mother's suggestion. I was a boy at the time, but the incident made a strong impression on my mind, and I could not forget it. Coleridge had brilliant eyes and a very sweet voice."

The reader must not infer, from what is here said, that Wilkie Collins was a man of weak character, self-indulgent, and subservient to the "opium habit." Such an inference would be unjust to the memory of a great writer and a noble person. The works of Collins, which fill more than twenty-one volumes, bear decisive testimony to the poise of his intellect, the opulence of his genius, the incessancy of his labor, the copious wealth of his invention, the breadth of

his knowledge of life, the ardency of his sympathetic emotion, and, above all, the sturdy independence and adamantine solidity of his character. He possessed an extraordinary mind, and in adding a body of original, vital, imaginative fiction to the literature of his country he accomplished an extraordinary work. But during the greater part of his life he was an invalid, and, remembering the circumstances under which he wrote, it is amazing that he accomplished so much. One denotement of his potent individuality is the uniform texture of his style,—a style that is unique. He portrayed many characters, and it is notable that those characters, with little exception, express themselves in one and the same verbal form: the faculty, possessed in such a marvellous degree by Shakespeare and by Sir Walter Scott, of making each person speak in exact accordance with his or her personality, he did not employ: yet every character that he drew is distinctly individual, and, by a certain subtle magic of artistic skill, it is made to seem to be talking in a perfectly individual manner. Consummate art, thus exemplified, is not achieved with a dis-

ordered intellect, Personal observation of Collins, furthermore, found him exceptionally self-possessed, firm in mind, clear in thought, dignified yet gentle in manner, the embodiment of the sweet gravity and involuntary grace that fancy associates with the ideal of such men as Cowley and Addison. His aspect was singular and interesting. When seated he appeared to be a portly man, but when he stood that impression was dispelled. His head was large and leonine. His eyes were hazel. He wore an ample beard. His body was small, his shoulders were slightly stooped, and his limbs were, seemingly, attenuated. His walk was slow and feeble,—that of a person who had been weakened by great pain. His voice, though low, was clear, kindly, and winning, and his demeanor was marked by the formal courtesy that is commonly ascribed to persons designated as survivors of "the old school." That formal bearing, which, in fact, was involuntary distinction, did not lessen his geniality of companionship. He freely participated in social enjoyments, but it was in the communion of intellectual taste that he especially

WILLIAM WILKIE COLLINS

Photograph by Lock and Whitfield

rejoiced, and it was through the medium of such communion, as his writings prove, that he imparted the most of pleasure and benefit. As a writer he taught,—not by didacticism but by suggestion,—purity of living and charity of feeling, and as a man he was the inspiration of nobility to every person who came within the scope of his influence, and especially to those who were blessed with his friendship.

In matters of taste Collins was epicurean. The perfection of enjoyment, he assured me, is only to be obtained when you are at sea, in a luxurious, well-appointed steam yacht, in lovely summer weather. One of his eccentricities resulted from his inordinate liking for black pepper: "It is seldom provided at dinner tables to which I repair," he said, "and therefore I take care to provide it myself." He did; and pleasurable it was to see the droll gravity with which he produced that condiment. His ways were ever ingenuous and characteristic. His reminiscent talk was charming,—the word-pictures that he made of authors whom he had seen and known, such as Thomas Hood, Douglas Jerrold,

and Thackeray, being, in effect, like perfect cameos. Here is a characteristic letter, affording a glimpse of his boyhood:

90 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.
London, September 3rd, 1881.

My Dear Winter:

If you have long since dismissed me from memory, you have only treated an inexcusably bad correspondent as he deserves. When I was at school,—perpetually getting punished as "a bad boy,"—the master used to turn me to good moral account, as a means of making his model scholars ashamed of their occasional lapses into misconduct: "If it had been Collins I should not have felt shocked and surprised. Nobody *expects* anything of *him*. But You!!"—etc., etc.

In the hope that you, by this time, "expect nothing of Collins" I venture to appeal to your indulgence. In the intervals of rheumatic gout I still write stories—and I send to you, by registered book-post, my latest effort, called "The Black Robe," in the belief that you will "give me another chance," and honor me by accepting the work. It is thought, on the European side of the Atlantic, in Roman Catholic countries as well as in Protestant England, to be the best thing I have written for some time. And it is memorable to *me* as having produced a freely offered gift of forty pounds from one of the pirates who have seized it on the American side! ! !

I write with your new editions,—so kindly sent to me,—in the nearest book-case. In the Poems I rejoice to see my special favorites included in the new publication—"The

Ideal," "Rosemary" and the exquisitely tender verses which enshrine the memory of "Ada Clare."

I have heard of you from Miss Cavendish. May I hope to hear of you next—from yourself?

Always truly yours,

WILKIE COLLINS.

His place is with the great masters of English fiction. He did not copy the surfaces of common life, calling the product "nature," and vaunting it as truth. He knew how to select and how to combine, and he possessed the great art of delicate exaggeration. In the telling of his stories he created characters, and he made them live. His employment of accessories,—meaning scenery, whether civic or rural; climate; atmosphere; cloud; sunshine; rain; the sound of the sea, or the ripple of leaves in the wind; morning or evening, or midnight,—is exact in its fitness and unerring in its effect. In that respect, as in his devotion to romance, he followed in the footsteps of the chieftain of the whole inspired band, Sir Walter Scott,—whom he designated, in writing to me, "the Prince, the King, the Emperor, the God Almighty of novelists." He was deeply interested in his own time, in the advance-

ment of civilization and the consequent promotion of the public welfare. He spoke and wrote with satirical contempt of the obstructive worship of old things,—especially in Literature and Painting,—merely because they are old. He cordially recognized and welcomed meritorious achievement in any and every line of contemporary endeavor, and quite as cordially he condemned contemporary pretence. He was the soul of honesty. He lived a good life: and he is remembered not only with honor but with love.

It happened that I was travelling from London to Paris when the death of Collins occurred, and I was unable to attend his funeral. A little later, aboard the steamship Aurania, in mid-ocean, October 10, 1889, I wrote the commemorative lines which follow.

I

Often and often, when the days were dark
And, whether to remember or behold,
Life was a burden, and my heart, grown old
With sorrow, scarce was conscious, did I mark
How from thy distant place across the sea,
Vibrant with hope and with emotion free,

Thy voice of cheer rose like the morning lark—
And that was comfort if not joy to me!
For in the weakness of our human grief
The mind that does not break and will not bend
Teaches endurance as the one true friend,
The steadfast anchor and the sure relief.
That was thy word, and what thy precept taught
Thy life made regnant in one living thought.

II

Thy vision saw the halo of romance
Round every common thing that men behold.
Thy lucid art could turn to precious gold,—
Like roseate motes that in the sunbeams dance,—
Whatever object met thy kindling glance,
And in that mirror life was never cold.
A gracious warmth suffused thy sparkling page,
And woman's passionate heart by thee was drawn,
With all the glorious colors of the dawn,
Against the background of this pagan age—
Her need of love, her sacrifice, her trance
Of patient pain, her weary pilgrimage!
Thou knewest all of grief that can be known,
And didst portray all sorrows but thine own.

III

Where shall I turn, now that thy lips are dumb
And night is on the eyes that loved me well?
What other voice, across thy dying knell,
With like triumphant notes of power will come?

Alas! my ravaged heart is still and numb
With thinking of the blank that must remain!
Yet be it mine, amid these wastes of pain,
Where all must falter and where many sink,
To stay the foot of misery on the brink
Of dark despair, to bid blind sorrow see—
Teaching that human will breaks every chain
When once endurance sets the spirit free;
And, living thus thy perfect faith, to think
I am to others what thou wert to me.

X

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

In my youth I was often privileged to sit by the fireside of the poet Longfellow, and with his encouragement and under his guidance I entered upon that service of literature to which, humbly but earnestly, my life has been devoted. Longfellow possessed a great and peculiar fascination for youth. He naturally attracted to himself all unsophisticated spirits; and, as I did not then know, but subsequently learned, he naturally attracted to himself all persons intrinsically noble. His gentleness was elemental. His tact was inerrant. His patience never failed. As I recall him, I am conscious of a beautiful spirit; a lovely life; a perfect image of continence, wisdom, dignity, sweetness, and grace. In Longfellow's home, the old Craigie mansion at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on an autumn evening more than fifty years ago, was assembled a brilliant com-

pany; and as I entered the large drawing-room, which now is the library, one figure in particular attracted my gaze. It was a young man, lithe, slender, faultlessly apparelled, very handsome, who rose at my approach, turning upon me a countenance that beamed with kindness, and a smile that was a welcome from the heart. His complexion was fair. His hair was brown, long, and waving. His features were regular and of exquisite refinement. His eyes were blue. His bearing was that of manly freedom and unconventional grace, and yet it was that of absolute dignity. He had the manner of the natural aristocrat—a manner that is born, not made; a manner that is never found except in persons who are self-centred without being selfish; who are intrinsically noble, simple, and true. I was introduced to him by Longfellow: and then and thus it was that I first beheld George William Curtis. From that hour until the day he died I was honored with his friendship, now become a hallowed memory. That meeting was more than once recalled between us; and as I look back to it, across the varied

landscape of intervening years, I see it as a precious and altogether exceptional experience. It was a hand dispensing nothing but blessings which bestowed that incomparable boon,—the illustrious, venerated hand of the foremost poet of America. It was the splendid munificence of Longfellow that gave the benediction of Curtis.

It is not because he was a friend of mine that I try to assist in the commemoration of him; it is because he was a great person. The career of Curtis was rounded and complete. The splendid structure of his character stands before the world like a monument of gold. It is not for his sake that tribute is laid upon the shrine of memory; it is for our own. Not to express homage for a public benefactor is to fail in self-respect. Not to reverence a noble and exemplary character is to forego a benefit that is individual as well as social. Nowhere else can so much strength be derived as from the contemplation of men and women who pass through the vicissitudes of human experience, the ordeal of life and death, not without action and not with-

out feeling, but calmly and bravely, without fever and without fear. There is nothing greater in this world, nor can there be anything greater in the world to come, than a perfectly pure, true, resolute soul. When the old Scotch Lord Balmerino was awaiting the block, on Tower Hill,—in expiation of his alleged treason to the House of Hanover,—he wrote a few great words, that ought to be forever remembered. "The man who is not fit to die," he said, "is not fit to live." That was the voice of a hero. An image of heroism like that is of inestimable value, and it abides in the soul as a perpetual benediction. In Shakespeare's tragedy, when the foes of *Brutus* are seeking to capture him on the field of battle, his friend *Lucilius,* whom they have already taken, denotes, in two consummate lines, the same inspiring ideal of superb stability:

> When you do find him, or alive or dead,
> He will be found like Brutus, like himself.

That might always have been said of Curtis. In every duty faithful; in every trial adequate; in every attribute of nobility perfect,—

He taught us how to live, and—oh, too high
The price for knowledge!—taught us how to die.

It is not the achievement of Curtis, however, that lingers most lovingly in the memory; it is the character. The authoritative, final word upon his works will be spoken by posterity.

"When a neighbor dies" (so Curtis wrote, in his wise, sympathetic sketch of the beloved and lamented Theodore Winthrop), "his form and quality appear clearly, as if he had been dead a thousand years. Then we see what we only felt before. Heroes in history seem to us poetic because they are there. But if we should tell the simple truth of some of our neighbors it would sound like poetry. . . ."

The truth about Curtis has that sound now, and more and more it will have that sound as time proceeds. It is the story of a man of genius whose pure life and splendid powers were devoted to the ministry of beauty and to the self-sacrificing service of mankind. The superficial facts of that story, indeed, are familiar and usual. It was the inspiration of them that made them poetic,—that profound, intuitive sense of

the obligation of noble living which controlled, fashioned, and directed his every thought and deed. The incidents customary in the life of a man of letters are scarcely more important than were the migrations of the *Vicar of Wakefield* from the brown bed to the blue and from the blue bed back again to the brown. He moves from place to place; he has ill fortune and good fortune; he gains and loses; he rejoices and suffers; he writes books: and he is not justly appreciated until he is dead. Curtis was a man of letters, born, in 1824, in our American Venice, the New England city of Providence; born nearly two months before the death of Byron (so near, in literature, we always are to the great names of the past), and a boy of eight in that dark year which ended the illustrious lives of Goethe and Sir Walter Scott. It has been usual to ascribe the direction of his career to the influence of his juvenile experience at Brook Farm, in Roxbury, where he resided from 1840 to 1844; but it should be remembered that the Brook Farm ideal was in his mind before he went there,—the ideal of a social existence regulated by absolute justice and

adorned by absolute beauty. In that idyllic retreat, that earthly Eden, conceived and founded by the learned and gentle George Ripley as a home for all the beatitudes and all the arts, and later, at Concord, his young mind, no doubt, was stimulated by some of the most invigorating forces that ever were liberated upon human thought: Theodore Parker, who was incarnate truth; the mystical spirit of Channing; the resolute, intrepid Charles Anderson Dana, the sombre, imaginative Hawthorne; the audacious intellect and indomitable will of Margaret Fuller; and, greatest of all, the heaven-eyed thought of Emerson. But the preordination of that mind to the service of justice, beauty, and humanity was germinal in itself. Curtis began wisely, because he followed the star of his destiny. He was wise, in boyhood, when he went to Brook Farm. He was wiser still in early manhood, having formally adopted the vocation of literature, when he sought the haunted lands of the Orient, and found inspiration and theme in subjects that were novel because their scene was both august and remote. On that expedition, consuming

four precious years, he penetrated into the country of the Nile, and he roamed in Arabia and Syria. He stood before the Sphinx and he knelt at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It is a privilege to be able to add, since he was an American humorist, that he did not endeavor to be comic. Curtis was a humorist, but he was not the humorist who grins amid the sculptures of Westminster Abbey. He was a humorist as Addison was, whom he much resembled. He looked upon life with tranquil, pensive, kindly eyes. He exulted in all of goodness that it contains; he touched its foibles with bland, whimsical drollery; he would have made all persons happy by making them all noble, serene, gentle, and patient. Such a mind could degrade nothing. Least of all could it degrade dignity with sport, or antiquity with ridicule. He looked at the statue of Memnon, and he saw that " serene repose is the attitude and character of godlike grandeur." " Those forms," he said, " impress man with himself. In them we no longer succumb to the landscape, but sit, individual and imperial, under the sky, by the moun-

tains and the river. Man is magnified in Memnon." He stood among the ruined temples of Erment, and he saw Cleopatra, glorious in beauty upon the throne of Rameses, and he uttered neither a scrap of morality nor a figment of jest. "Nothing Egyptian," he said, "is so cognate to our warm human sympathy as the rich romance of Cleopatra and her Roman lovers." . . . "The great persons and events," he added, "that notch time in passing, do so because Nature gave them such an excessive and exaggerated impulse that wherever they touch they leave their mark; and that intense humanity secures human sympathy beyond the most beautiful balance, which, indeed, the angels love and we are beginning to appreciate."

That was the spirit in which he rambled, and saw, and wrote. "The highest value of travel," he urged, "is not the accumulation of facts, but the perception of their significance." In those true words he made his comment, not simply upon the immediate and local scene, but upon the whole wide stage of human activity and experience. He was wise, when he

began to labor for the Present, thus to fortify himself with the meaning of the Past. Those early books of his, "Nile Notes," and the "Howadji in Syria," glow with the authentic vitality of nature,—her warmth, color, copious profusion, and exultant joy,—and they are buoyant with the ardor of an auspicious, unsaddened soul. But they are exceptionally precious for their guidance to the springs of his character. In the "Syria" there is a passage that, perhaps, furnishes the key to his whole career. He is speaking of successful persons, and he says this: ". . . Success is a delusion. It is an attainment—but who attains? It is the horizon, always bounding our path, and therefore never gained. The Pope, triple-crowned, and borne, with flabella, through St. Peter's, is not successful,—for he might be canonized into a saint. Pygmalion, before his perfect statue, is not successful,—for it might live. Raphael, finishing the Sistine Madonna, is not successful,—for her beauty has revealed to him a finer and an unattainable beauty."

In those words you perceive the spirit of com-

prehensive, sweet, and tolerant reason that was ever the conspicuous attribute of his mind. Those words denote, indeed, the inherent forces that governed him to the last,—perception and practical remembrance of what has already been accomplished, and the realization that human life is not final achievement but is endless endeavor.

Curtis occasionally wrote verse, but to the poetic laurel he made no pretension. In 1863 he delivered before a society, at Providence, called the Sons of Rhode Island, a poem of four hundred and eighteen lines, called "A Rhyme of Rhode Island and the Times," which incorporates an impassioned pæan for the flag of the United States, manifests his patriotic ardor, shows the quality of his diction in verse, and indicates that if he had chosen to cultivate the rhythmical style that was dominant in the eighteenth century he might have become expert in the use of it. Poetry, however, was not his natural vocation. A "fine frenzy," as Shakespeare calls it, is inseparable from the temperament of the poet. He must not yield his mind absolutely to its control, but he must be capa-

ble of it and he must guide and direct its course. He must not, with Savage and kindred outcasts, abdicate the supremacy of the soul. He must, with Shakespeare and with Goethe (to borrow the fine figure of Addison), "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm." The conduct of his life must not be a delirium; but the capability of wildness must, inevitably, be a part of his nature. Conventionality is bounded by four walls. Unless the heart of the poet be passionate he cannot move the hearts of others, and the poet who does not touch the heart is a poet of no importance. Curtis was a man of deep poetic sensibility. In that idyllic composition, "Prue and I," the poetic atmosphere is invariably sustained, and it is invariably beautiful. The use of poetic quotation, wherever it occurs, throughout his writings, is remarkably felicitous,—as in his book "Lotus-Eating," written in 1851,—and it manifests keen appreciation of the poetic element. His analysis of the genius of Bryant, in his noble oration before the Century Club, in 1878, is not less subtle than potential, and it leaves nothing

to be said. His perception of the ideal,—as when he wrote upon "Hamlet," with the spiritual mind and princelike figure of Edwin Booth in that character,—was equally profound and comprehensive, and as fine and delicate as it was unerringly true. There can be little doubt that he was conscious, originally, of a strong impulse toward poetry, but that this was restricted and presently was diverted into other channels, partly by the stress of his philosophical temperament, and partly by the untoward force of iron circumstance. His nature was not without fervor, but it was the fervor of moral and spiritual enthusiasm, not of passion. His faculties and feelings were exquisitely poised, and I do not think there ever was a time in all his life when that perfect sanity was disturbed by any inordinate waywardness or any blast of storm. The benign and potent but utterly dispassionate influence of Emerson touched his responsive spirit, at the beginning of his career, and, beneath that mystic and wonderful spell of Oriental contemplation and bland and sweet composure, his destiny was fulfilled. Like gravitates to like. Each indi-

vidual sways by that power, whatsoever it be, to which in nature he is the most closely attuned. The poetic voice of Emerson was the voice not of the human heart, but of the pantheistic spirit. In Curtis the poetic voice was less remote and more human; but it was of kindred, elusive quality. It was not often heard. It sounded very sweetly in his tender lyric:

> Sing the song that once you sung,
> When we were together young,
> When there were but you and I
> Underneath the summer sky.
>
> Sing the song, and o'er and o'er—
> But I know that nevermore
> Will it be the song you sung
> When we were together young.

There can be no higher mission than that of the poet, but there are vocations that exact more direct practical effort and involve more immediate practical results. One of those vocations early and largely absorbed the mind of Curtis.

To persons of the present day it would be difficult to impart an adequate idea of the state of political feeling that existed in New England about 1855. The passage of the Fugitive

Slave Law, which was regarded as the culmination of a long series of encroachments, had inspired a tremendous resentment, and the community was seething with bitterness and conflict. The effusive, hysterical novel of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had blazoned the national evil of slavery, and had aroused and inflamed thousands of hearts against it, as a sin and a disgrace. Theodore Parker, that moral and intellectual giant, was preaching, in the Boston Music Hall. The passionate soul of Thomas Starr King poured forth its melodious fervor, in the old church in Hollis Street. Sumner, Phillips, Wilson, Giddings, Hale, and Burlingame, in Faneuil Hall, and elsewhere, were pleading the cause of the slave and the purification of the flag. The return of Anthony Burns from Boston, in June, 1854, when the courthouse was surrounded by chains and by soldiers, and when State Street was commanded by cannon, although perfectly legal, was felt, by every freeman, as an act of monstrous tyranny, and as the consummation of national shame. The murderous assault on Sumner, committed, in the United

States Senate chamber, by Brooks of South Carolina, had aroused all that was best of manly pride and moral purpose in the North, and, from the moment when that blow was struck, every man not blinded by folly knew that the end of human slavery in the Republic must inevitably come. There never had been seen in our political history so wild a tide of enthusiasm as that which swept through the New England States, bearing onward the standard of Frémont, in 1856. Statesmen, indeed, there were, foreseeing and dreading civil war, who steadily counselled moderation and compromise. Edward Everett was one of those pacificators, and Rufus Choate was another. Choate, in Faneuil Hall, delivered one of the most enchanting orations of his life, in solemn and passionate warning against those impetuous zealots of freedom who, as he beheld them, were striving to rend asunder the colossal crag of national unity, already smitten by the lightning and riven from summit to base. And it must be admitted, and it needs no apology, that the conviction of generous patriotism, in those wild days of wrath and tem-

pest, was the conviction that a Union under which every citizen of every free State was, by the law, made a hunter of negro slaves for a Southern driver, was not only worthless but infamous. Conservatives, cynics, mercenary, scheming politicians, and timid friends of peace might hesitate, and palter with the occasion, and seek to evade the issue and postpone the struggle; but the general drift of New England sentiment was all the other way. Old political lines disappeared. The everlasting bickerings of Protestant and Catholic were for a moment hushed. The Know-Nothings vanished. The thin ghosts of the old silver-gray Whig party, led by Bell and Everett, moaned feebly at parting, and faded into air. Elsewhere in the nation the lines of party conflict were sharply drawn; but in New England one determination animated every bosom,—the determination that human slavery should perish. The spirit that walked abroad was the spirit of Concord Bridge and Bunker Hill. The silent voices of Samuel Adams and James Otis were silent no more. "My ancestor fell at Lexington," said old Joel

Parker,—then over threescore years of age,—" and I am ready to shed more of the same blood in the same cause." It was a tremendous epoch in New England history, and those persons who were youths in it felt their hearts aflame with holy ardor in a righteous cause. I was myself a follower of the Pathfinder, and a speaker for him, in that stormy time, assailing Choate and Caleb Cushing, and other giants of the adverse faction, with the freedom and confidence that are possible only to unlimited moral enthusiasm. What a different world it was from the world of to-day! How sure we were that all we desired to do was wise and right! How plainly we saw our duty, and how eager we were for the onset and the strife! If we could only have foreseen the beatific condition of the present, I wonder if that zeal would have cooled. Some of us have grown a little weary of rolling the Sisyphus stone of benevolence, for the aggrandizement of a selfish multitude, careless of everything except its sensual enjoyment. But it was a glorious enthusiasm while it lasted.

Into that conflict, of Right against Wrong,

Curtis threw himself, with all his soul. His reputation as a speaker had already been established. He had made his first public address in 1851, before the New York National Academy of Design, discussing "Contemporary Artists of Europe," and in 1853 he had formally adopted the Platform as a vocation; and it continued to be a part of his vocation for the next twenty years. He was everywhere popular in the lyceum, and he now brought into the more turbulent field of politics the dignity of the scholar, the refinement and grace of the gentleman, and all the varied equipments of the zealous and accomplished advocate, the caustic satirist, and the impassioned champion of the rights of man. I first heard him speak on politics, making an appeal for Frémont, at a popular convention in the town of Fitchburg. It was on a summer day, under canvas, but almost in the open air. The assemblage was large. Curtis followed Horace Greeley, with whose peculiar drawl and rustic aspect his princelike demeanor and lucid and sonorous rhetoric were in striking contrast. Neither of those men was worldly-

wise; neither was versed in political duplicity. Greeley, no doubt, had then the advantage in political wisdom; but Curtis was the orator, and, while Curtis spoke, the hearts of that multitude were first lured and entranced by the golden tones of his delicious voice, and then were shaken, as with a whirlwind, by the righteous fervor of his magnificent enthusiasm. It was the diamond morning blaze of perfect eloquence. He continued to speak for that cause,—everywhere with great effect; and down to the war-time, and during the war-time, the principles which are the basis of the American Republic had no champion more eloquent or more sincere. He abandoned the platform as a regular employment in 1873; but he never altogether ceased the exercise of that matchless gift of oratory for which he was remarkable and by which he was enabled to accomplish so much good and diffuse so much happiness.

In that domain he came to his zenith. The art in which Curtis excelled his contemporaries was the art of oratory. Many other authors wrote better in verse, and some others wrote as

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

Photograph by Pach

well in prose. Hawthorne, Motley, Lowell, Whipple, Giles, Mitchell, Warner, and Stedman were masters of style. But in the felicity of speech Curtis was supreme above all other men of his generation. My reference is to the period from 1860 to 1890. Oratory as it existed in America in the previous epoch has no living representative. Curtis was the last orator of the great school of Everett, Sumner, and Wendell Phillips. His model, in so far as he had a model, was Sumner, and the style of Sumner was based on that of Burke. But Curtis had heard more magical voices than those, for he had heard Daniel Webster and Rufus Choate; and, although he was averse to their politics, he could profit by their example. Webster and Choate, each in a different way, were perfection. The eloquence of Webster had the affluent potentiality of the rising sun; of the lonely mountain; of the long, regular, successive surges of the resounding sea. His periods were as lucid as the light. His logic was irresistible. His facts came on in a solid phalanx of overwhelming power. His tones were crystal-clear. His magnificent per-

son towered in dignity and seemed colossal in its imperial grandeur. His voice grew in volume as he became more and more aroused, and his language, glowing with the fire of conviction, rose and swelled and broke like the great ninth wave that shakes the solid crag. His speech, however, was addressed always to the reason, never to the imagination. The eloquence of Rufus Choate, on the other hand, was the passionate enchantment of the actor and the poet, an eloquence in which the listener felt the rush of the tempest, and heard the crash of breakers, and the howling of frantic gales, and the sobbing wail of homeless winds, in bleak and haunted regions of perpetual night. He began calmly, often in a tone that was hardly more than a whisper; but, as he proceeded, the whole man was gradually absorbed and transfigured, as into a fountain of fire, which then poured forth, in one tumultuous and overwhelming torrent of melody, the iridescent splendors of description, and appeal, and humor, and pathos, and invective, and sarcasm, and poetry, and beauty—till the listener lost all consciousness of self and was

borne away as on a golden river flowing to a land of dreams. The vocabulary of that orator seemed literally to have no limit. His voice sounded every note, from a low, piercing whisper to a shrill, sonorous scream. His remarkable appearance, furthermore, enhanced the magic of his speech. The tall, gaunt, vital figure, the symmetrical head, the clustered hair,—once black, now faintly touched with gray,—the emaciated, haggard countenance, the pallid olive complexion, the proud Arabian features, the mournful, flaming brown eyes, the imperial demeanor, and wild and lawless grace,—all those attributes of a strange, poetic personality commingled with the boundless resources of his eloquence to rivet the spell of altogether exceptional character and genius. In singular contrast with Choate was still another great orator whom Curtis heard,—and about whom he has written,—that consummate scholar and rhetorician Edward Everett. There is no statelier figure in American history. If Everett had been as puissant in character as he was ample in scholarship, and as rich in emotion as he was fine

in intellect, he would have been the peerless wonder of the age. He was a person of singular beauty. His form was a little above the middle height and perfectly proportioned. His head was beautifully formed and exquisitely poised. His closely clustering hair was as white as silver. His features were regular; his eyes were dark; his countenance was pale, refined, and cold. His aspect was formal and severe. He dressed habitually in black, often wearing around his neck a thin gold chain, outside of his coat. His eloquence was the perfection of art. I heard him often, and in every one of his orations,—except the magnificent one that he gave in Faneuil Hall on the death of Rufus Choate, which was supreme and seemingly spontaneous,—his art was distinctly obvious. He began in a level tone and with a formal manner. He spoke without a manuscript, and whether his speech was long or short he never missed a word nor made an error. As he proceeded, his countenance kindled and his figure began to move. With action he was profuse, and every one of his gestures had the beauty of a mathematical curve and the

certainty of mathematical demonstration. His movement suited his words; his pauses were exactly timed; his finely modulated voice rose and fell, with rhythmic beat; and his polished periods flowed from his lips with limpid fluency and delicious cadence. A distinguishing attribute of his art was its elaborate complexity. In his noble oration on Washington, when he came to contrast the honesty of that patriot with the alleged mercenary greed of Marlborough, it was not with words alone that he pointed his moral, but with a graceful, energetic blow upon his pocket that mingled the jingle of coin with the accents of his need, but he will not write better. The in 1852, contained a description of the visible planets and constellations in the midnight sky; and his verbal pageantry was so magnificent that almost, I thought, it might take its place among them.

Such was the school of oratory in which Curtis studied and in which his style was formed. It no longer exists. The oratory of a later day is characterized by colloquialism, familiarity, and comic anecdote. Curtis maintained the dignity

of the old order. Some of my readers, perhaps, remember the charm of his manner,—how subtle it was, yet seemingly how simple; how completely it convinced and satisfied; how it clarified intelligence; how it ennobled feeling. One secret of it, no doubt, was its perfect sincerity. Noble himself, and speaking only for right, and truth, and beauty, he addressed nobility in others. That consideration would explain the moral and the genial authority of his eloquence. The total effect of it, however, was attributable to his exquisite, inexplicable art. He could make an extemporaneous speech, but, as a rule, his speeches were carefully prepared. They had not always been written, but they had been composed and considered. He possessed absolute self-control; a keen sense of symmetry and proportion; the faculty of logical thought and lucid statement; copious resources of felicitous illustration; passionate earnestness, surpassing sweetness of speech, and perfect grace of action. Like Everett, whom he more closely resembled than he did any other of the great masters of oratory, he could trust his memory and he could trust his

composure. He began with the natural deference of unstudied courtesy, serene, propitiatory, irresistibly winning. He captured the eye and the ear upon the instant, and, before he had been speaking for many minutes, he captured the heart. There was not much action in his delivery; there never was any artifice. His gentle tones grew earnest. His fine face became illumined. His golden periods flowed with more and more of impetuous force, and the climax of their perfect music was always exactly identical with the climax of their thought. There always was a certain culmination of fervent power at which he aimed, and after that a gradual subsidence to the previous level of gracious serenity. He created and sustained the illusion of spontaneity. The auditor never felt that he had been beguiled by art, but only that he had been entranced by nature. I never could explain the charm that he exercised. I can only say of him, as he said of Wendell Phillips: "The secret of the rose's sweetness, of the bird's ecstasy, of the sunset's glory—that is the secret of genius and of eloquence."

While, however, the secret of his eloquence was elusive, the purpose and effect of it were perfectly clear. It dignified the subject and it ennobled the hearer. He once told me of a conversation, about poetry and oratory, between himself and the once eminent United States senator, Roscoe Conkling. That statesman, having declared that, in his judgment, the perfection of poetry was "Casabianca," by Mrs. Hemans ("The boy stood on the burning deck"), and the perfection of oratory a passage in a Fourth-of-July oration by Charles Sprague, desired Curtis to name a supreme specimen of eloquence. "I mentioned," said Curtis, "a passage in Emerson's Dartmouth College oration,—in which, however, Mr. Conkling could perceive no peculiar force." That passage Curtis repeated to me. The citation of it is appropriate, not only as showing his ideal but as explaining his devotion, not to art alone but to conscience.

> You will hear every day [so runs that pearl of noble thought and feeling] the maxims of a low prudence. You will hear that the first duty is to get land and money, place and name. "What is this Truth you seek? what is this

Beauty?" men will ask, with derision. If, nevertheless, God have called any of you to explore truth and beauty, be bold, be firm, be true! When you shall say, "As others do, so will I; I renounce, I am sorry for, my early visions; I must eat the good of the land and let learning and romantic expectation go until a more convenient season";—then dies the man in you; then once more perish the buds of art and poetry and science, as they have died already in a thousand, thousand men. The hour of that choice is the crisis of your history; and see that you hold yourself fast by the intellect.

It was natural that Curtis should adopt that doctrine. He would have evolved it if he had not found it. That divine law was in his nature, and from that divine law he never swerved.

How should a man of genius use his gift? Setting aside the restrictive pressure of circumstance, two ways are open to him. He may cultivate himself, standing aloof from the world, as Goethe did and as Tennyson did,—aiming to make his powers of expression perfect, and to make his expression itself universal, potential, irresistible; or he may take an executive course and yoke himself to the plough and the harrow, aiming to exert an immediate influence upon his environment. The former way is not at once

comprehended by the world: the latter is more obvious.

In his poem of "Retaliation," Goldsmith has designated Edmund Burke as a man who,

> Born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

It always seemed to me that Curtis made one sacrifice when he went into business, and another when he went into politics. He manifested, indeed, sterling character and splendid ability in both; yet he did not, in a practical sense, succeed in either. The end of his experiment in business was a heavy burden of debt, which he was compelled to bear through a long period of anxious and strenuous toil. His experience was not the terrible experience of Sir Walter Scott, that heroic gentleman, that supreme and incomparable magician of romance! but it was an experience of the same kind. He released himself from his burden, justly and honorably, at last; but the strain upon his mind was an injury to him, and the literature of his country is poorer because of the sacrifice that he was obliged to

make. On a day in 1860 I met him in Broadway, and he said to me, very earnestly, "Take advantage of the moment; don't delay too long the fine poem, the great novel, that you intend to write." It was the wise philosophy that takes heed of the enormous values of youth and freedom. It pleases some philosophers, indeed, to believe that a man of letters will accomplish his best expression when goaded by what Shakespeare calls "the thorny point of bare distress." That practice of glorifying hardship is sometimes soothing to human vanity. Men have thought themselves heroes because they rise early. It may possibly be true of the poets that they "learn in suffering what they teach in song"; but the suffering must not be sordid. Literature was never yet enriched through the pressure of want. The author may write more, because of his need, but he will not write better. The best literatures of the world, the literatures of Greece and England, were created in the gentlest and most propitious climates of the world. The best individual works in those literatures,—with little exception,—were produced by writers

whose physical circumstances were those of comfort and peace. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Herrick, Addison, Pope, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Scott, Moore, Lamb, Thackeray, Tennyson,—none of them lacked the means of reputable subsistence. Burns, fine as he was, would have been finer in a softer and sweeter environment of worldly circumstance. Curtis was a man of extraordinary patience, concentration, and poise. He accepted the conditions in which he found himself, and he made the best of them. His incessant industry and his composure, to the last, were prodigious. He never, indeed, was acquainted with want. The shackle that business imposed on him was the shackle of drudgery. He was compelled to write profusely and without pause. His pen was never at rest. Once, in 1873, he broke down, and for several months could not work at all,—his chair in "Harper's" being temporarily filled by that gentle, gracious poet the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich. During more than forty years, however, he worked all the time. Curtis, at his best, had the grace of Addison, the kindness of Steele, the sim-

plicity of Goldsmith, and the nervous force of the incomparable Sterne. Writing under such conditions, however, no man can always be at his best. The wonder is that his average is so fine. He attained to a high and orderly level of wise and kindly thought, of gentle fancy, and of winning ease, and he steadily maintained it. He had an exceptional faculty for choosing diversified themes, and his treatment of them was always felicitous. He wrought in many moods, but always genially and without flurry, and he gave the continuous impression of spontaneity and pleasure. A fetter, however, is not the less a fetter because it is lightly borne, and whatever is easy to read was hard to write. It may be, of course, that the troublesome business experience in the life of Curtis was only an insignificant incident. It may be that he fulfilled himself as an author, leaving nothing undone that he had the power to do. But that is not my reading of the artistic mind, and it is not my reading of him. For me the mist was drawn too early across those luminous and tender pictures of the Orient, those haunting shapes and old his-

toric splendors of the Nile. For me the rich, tranquil note of tender music that breathes in "Prue and I" was too soon hushed and changed. Genius is the petrel, and like the petrel it loves the freedom of the winds and waves.

All thinkers repudiate the narrow philosophy that would regulate one man's life by the standard of another. "Be yourself!" is the precept of the highest wisdom. Shakespeare has written his plays. Milton has written his epic. Those things cannot be done again and should not be expected. The new genius must mount upon its own wings, and hold its own flight, and seek the eyry that best it loves. I recognize, and feel, and honor the nobility of Curtis as a citizen; but I cannot cast aside the regret that he did not dedicate himself exclusively to literature. Everything is relative. To such a nature as that of Curtis the pursuits of business and politics are foreign and inappropriate. He was undoubtedly equal to all their responsibilities and duties; but he was equal to much more, to things different and higher, and the practical service essential to business and politics did not need him. The

State, indeed, needs the virtue that he possessed, but needs it in the form not of the poet, but of the gladiator, who, when he goes rejoicing to battle, has no harp to leave in silence and no garlands to cast unheeded in the dust. I would send Saint Peter, with his sword, to the primary meeting; I would not send the apostle John. The organist should not be required to blow the bellows. Curtis was, by nature, a man of letters. His faculty in that direction was prodigious. So good a judge as Thackeray, looking at him as a young man, declared him to be the most auspicious of all our authors. It is a great vocation, and because its force, like that of Nature, is deep, slow, silent, and elemental, it is the most tremendous force concerned in human affairs. The mission of the man of letters is to touch the heart, to kindle the imagination, to ennoble the mind. He is the interpreter between the spirit of beauty that is in Nature and the general intelligence and sensibility of mankind. He sets to music the pageantry and the pathos of human life, and he keeps alive in the soul the holy enthusiasm of devotion to the ideal. He honors and

perpetuates heroic conduct, and he teaches, by many devices of art,—by story, and poem, and parable, and essay, and drama,—purity of life, integrity to man, and faith in God. He is continually reminding you of the goodness and loveliness to which you may attain; continually causing you to see what opportunities of nobility your life affords; continually delighting you with high thoughts and beautiful pictures. He does not preach to you. He does not attempt to regulate your specific actions. He does not assail you with the hysterical scream of the reformer. He does not carp, and vex, and meddle. He whispers to you, in your silent hours, of love, heroism, holiness, and immortality, and you are refreshed and strong, and come forth into the world smiling at fortune and bearing blessings in your hands. On bleak winter nights, with the breakers clashing on our icy coasts and the trumpets of the wind resounding in our chimneys, how sweet it has been, sitting by the evening lamp, to turn the pages of "The Tempest," or "The Antiquary," or "Old Mortality," or "Henry Esmond," or "The Idylls of the King,"

while the treasured faces of Shakespeare, Scott, Thackeray, and Tennyson looked down from the library walls! How sweet to read those tender, romantic, imaginative pages of "Prue and I," in which the pansies and the rosemary bloom forever, and to think of him who wrote them!

But whether the choice that Curtis made was a sacrifice or not, we know he made it, and we know why he made it. Prefigured in his character and his writings, at the outset, and illustrated in all his conduct, was the supreme law of his being—practical consideration for others. The trouble of the world was *his* trouble. The disciple of Andrew Marvel could not rest at ease in the summer-land of Keats. His heart was there; but his duty, as he saw it, steadily called him away. As Matthew Arnold writes:

> Some life of men unblest
> He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
> He went; his piping took a troubled sound,
> Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
> He could not wait their passing; he is dead.

He would have rejoiced in writing more books like "Prue and I"; but the virtuous glory of

the commonwealth and the honor and happiness of the people were forever present to him, as the first and the most solemn responsibility. When his prototype, Sir Philip Sidney, on that fatal September morning, over three hundred years ago, set forth for the field of battle at Zutphen, he met a fellow-soldier riding in light armor, and thereupon he cast away a portion of his own mail, and in so doing, as the event proved, he cast away his life, in order that he might be no better protected than his friend. In like manner Curtis would have no advantage for himself, nor even the semblance of advantage, that was not shared by others. He could not, with his superlative moral fervor, dedicate himself exclusively to letters while there was so much wrong in the world that clamored for him to do his part in setting it right. He believed that his direct, practical labor was essential and would avail, and he was eager to bestow it. Men of strong imagination begin life with illimitable ideals, with vast illusions, with ardent and generous faith. They are invariably disappointed, and they are usually embittered. Curtis was controlled less

by his imagination than by his moral sense. He had ideals, but they were based on reason. However much he may have loved to muse and dream, he saw the world as a fact and not as a fancy. He was often saddened by the spectacle of human littleness, but, broadly and generally, he was not disappointed in mankind, and he never became embittered. The belief in human nature, with which he began, remained his belief when he ended. Nothing could shake his conviction that man is inherently and intrinsically good. He believed in the people. He believed in earthly salvation for the poor, the weak, and the oppressed. He believed in chivalry toward woman. He believed in refinement, gentleness, and grace. He believed that the world is growing better and not worse. He believed in the inevitable, final triumph of truth and right over falsehood and wrong. He believed in freedom, charity, justice, hope, and love. The last line that fell from the dying pen of Longfellow might have been the last word that fell from the dying lips of Curtis: " 'Tis daybreak everywhere."

Upon the spirit in which he served the state

no words can make so clear a comment as his own. "There is no nobler ambition," he said, "than to fill a great office greatly." His estimate of Bryant culminates in the thought that "no man, no American, living or dead, has more truly and amply illustrated the scope and fidelity of republican citizenship." "The great argument for popular government," he declared, in his fine eulogy on Wendell Phillips, "is not the essential righteousness of a majority, but the celestial law which subordinates the brute force of numbers to intellectual and moral ascendancy." And his stately tribute to the character of Washington reached a climax in his impassioned homage to its lofty serenity, its moral grandeur, and its majestic repose. The quality of every man may be divined from the objects of his genuine devotion. There could be no doubt of the patriotism of Curtis; and in the conditions confronting the American Republic,—racial antagonism, discontented labor, socialism, communism, anarchy, a licentious press, a tottering church, ambitious sectarianism, the foreign vote, boss rule, ring rule, corruption in

office, levity, profanity, and a generally low state of public morals,—it was no slight thing that such a man as Curtis should have testified, to the last, his confidence in the future of the American people, and, to the last, should have devoted his splendid powers more largely to their practical service than to anything else. Fortunate is the man who can close the awfully true book of "Ecclesiastes" and forget its terrible lessons! Fortunate is the people that has the example, the sympathy, the support, and the guidance of such a man! If the altogether high and noble principles that Curtis advocated could prevail, then indeed the Republic that Washington conceived would be a glorious reality. When a wise and final check is placed upon the influence of mere numbers, then, and not till then, will the ideal of Washington be fulfilled! then, and not till then, will the Republic be safe! There is no belief more delusive and pernicious than the belief that virtue and wisdom are resident in the will of an ignorant, vacuous, frivolous multitude.

If, therefore, Curtis made a sacrifice in turn-

ing from the Muse to labor for the commonwealth, at least it was not made in vain. Nor must it be forgotten that,—despite his preoccupation as a publicist and as the incumbent of many unpaid and exacting offices,—his contributions to literature, especially in the domain of the essay, were extraordinary and brilliant. When, in 1846, he began his literary career, a young man of twenty-two, American literature had begun to assume the proportions of a substantial and impressive fabric. Paulding, Irving, Dana, Bryant, Cooper, and Percival were in the zenith. Longfellow and Whittier were ascending. Hawthorne was slowly becoming an auspicious figure. Halleck and George Fenno Hoffman were reigning poets. Poe had nearly finished, in penniless obscurity, his desolate strife. Holmes, aged thirty-seven, was but little beyond the threshold; and the fine genius of Stoddard was yet unknown. Griswold still held the sceptre, which Willis was presently to inherit. Allston and Paulding were sixty-seven years old; Irving was sixty-three; R. H. Dana was fifty-nine; Sprague fifty-four; Bryant fifty-

one; Drake, Halleck, and Percival fifty. Emerson was only forty-two. Into that company Curtis entered,—a boy among graybeards. Authors were more numerous than they had been thirty years earlier, but they were less numerous than they are now, and it was easier then to acquire literary reputation than it is at present; but genuine literary reputation was never easily obtained. Curtis made a new mark. In his Oriental travels the observation was large; the fancy delicate; the feeling deep; the touch light. Then came, in "Putnam's Magazine," between 1852 and 1854, the satirical "Potiphar Papers" and the romantic "Prue and I,"—the most imaginative and the loveliest of his books. After that the limitations of circumstance began to constrain him. He assumed the Easy Chair of "Harper's Magazine," in 1854,—receiving it from that Horatian classic of American letters, Donald G. Mitchell, by whom it had been started,—and he occupied it till the last. In "Harper's Weekly," in 1859-'60, he wrote the novel of "Trumps," a work which will transmit to the future that typical American politician, prosper-

ous and potential yesterday, to-day, and forever, General Arcularius Belch. In "Harper's Bazar" he wrote a series of papers, extending over a period of four years, called " Manners on the Road,"—the Road being life, and Manners being the conduct of people in their use of it. In those papers and in the Easy Chair the Addisonian drift of his mind was fully displayed. Those Essays do not excel " The Spectator " in thought, learning, humor, invention, or in the thousand felicities of a courtly, leisurely, lace-ruffle style; yet they are level with *The Spectator* in dignity of character and beauty of form; they surpass it in delicacy; and they surpass it in fertility of theme, sustained affluence of feeling, refinement of mind, and diversity of literary grace. "The Spectator" contains 635 papers, and it was written by several hands, though mostly by the hand of Addison, between March, 1710, and December, 1714,—a period of four years and nine months. The Easy Chair contains over twenty-five hundred articles, and it was written by Curtis alone, and was prolonged, with only one short intermission, for thirty-eight years.

It was Wesley, the Methodist preacher, who objected to the custom of letting the devil have all the good music. Curtis was a moralist who objected to the custom of letting the rakes have all the graces. Good men are sometimes so insipid that they make virtue tedious. In Curtis, notwithstanding his invincible composure and perfect decorum, there was a strain of the gypsy. He had "heard the chimes at midnight," and he had not forgotten their music. He had been a wandering minstrel in his youth, and he had struck the light guitar beneath the silver moon. As you turn the leaves of Lester Wallack's "Memories of Fifty Years," you find Curtis to be one of them; you come upon him very pleasantly, in the society of that brilliant actor, and you hear their youthful voices blended,—the robust yet gentle genius of Thackeray being a listener,—in the golden cadence of Ben Jonson's lovely lyric:

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.

Throughout his life Curtis never lost the capacity for sentiment; the love of music; the worship of art and beauty; the morning glow of chivalrous emotion. He never became ascetic. He was a Puritan, but he was not a bigot. He made the jest sparkle. He mingled in the dance. Without excess, but sweetly and genially, he filled a place at the festival. From his hand, in the remote days of the Castle Garden Opera, the glorious Jenny Lind received her first bouquet in America; and from his lips, in the last year of his life, her illustrious memory received its sweetest tribute. When he heard the distant note of the street-organ his spirit floated away in a dream of " the mellow richness of Italy "; yet he was a man who could have ridden with Cromwell's troopers, at Naseby, and given his life for a cause. There was no plainness of living to which he was not suited, and equally there was no opulence of culture and art that he could not wear with grace. The extremes of his character explain his power. There was no severity and no sacrifice of which he was not capable, in his scorn and detestation of evil and wrong; but for

human frailty he had more than the tenderness of woman. He knelt, with a disciple's reverence, at the austere shrine of Washington: yet his eloquence blazed, like morning sunlight upon a wilderness of roses, when he touched the rugged, mournful, humorous, pathetic story of Robert Burns.

In this evanescent and vanishing world one thing, and only one thing, endures,—the spiritual influence of good. Out of nature, out of literature, out of art, out of character, that alone, transmuted into conduct, survives ensphered when all the rest has perished. We are accustomed, unconsciously, to speak of our possessions and our deprivations as if we ourselves were permanent; not remembering that, in a very little while, our places also will be empty. He is dead who was our champion, our benefactor, our guide! Life is lonelier without his presence. The streets in which he used to walk seem vacant. The very air of his silent and slumberous Staten Island, musing at the mysterious gateway of the sea, seems more brooding and more solitary. Yet, being dead, he far more

truly lives than we do, and in far more exceeding glory, because in that potential influence which can never die. Still in our rambles he will meet us, with the old familiar look that always seemed to say, "You also are a prince, an emperor, a man; you also possess this wonderful heritage of beauty, and honor, and immortal life." Still in the homes of the poor will dwell the memory of his inexhaustible goodness. Still in the abodes of the rich will live the sweetness and the power of his benignant example: and still, when we have passed away and have been forgotten, a distant posterity, remembering the illustrious orator, the wise and gentle philosopher, the serene and delicate literary artist, the incorruptible patriot, the supreme gentleman, will cherish his writings, will revere his character, and will exult in the splendid tradition of his blameless, beautiful, beneficent life.

A few days after the death of Curtis (August 31, 1892) I wrote this threnody:

I

All the flowers were in their pride
On the day when Rupert died.

Dreamily, through dozing trees,
Sighed the idle summer breeze.

Wild birds, glancing in the air,
Spilled their music everywhere.

Not one sign of mortal ill
Told that his great heart was still.

Now the grass he loved to tread
Murmurs softly o'er his head:

Now the great green branches wave
High above his lonely grave:

While in grief's perpetual speech,
Roll the breakers on the beach.

Oh, my comrade, oh, my friend,
Must this parting be the end?

II

Weave the shroud and spread the pall!
Night and silence cover all.

Howsoever we deplore,
They who go return no more.

Never from that unknown track
Floats one answering whisper back.

Nature, vacant, will not heed
Lips that grieve or hearts that bleed.

Wherefore now should mourning word
Or the tearful dirge be heard?

How shall words our grief abate?—
Call him noble; call him great;

Say that faith, now gaunt and grim,
Once was fair because of him;

Say that goodness, round his way,
Made one everlasting day;

Say that beauty's heav'nly flame
Bourgeoned wheresoe'er he came;

Say that all life's common ways
Were made glorious in his gaze;

Say he gave us, hour by hour,
Hope and patience, grace and power;

Say his spirit was so true
That it made us noble, too;—

What is this, but to declare
Love's bereavement and despair?

What is this, but just to say
All we loved is torn away?

Weave the shroud and spread the pall!
Night and silence cover all.

III

Oh, my comrade, oh, my friend,
Must this parting be the end?

Heart and hope are growing old:
Dark the night comes down, and cold:

Few the souls that answer mine,
And no voice so sweet as thine.

Desert wastes of care remain—
Yet thy lips speak not again!

Gray eternities of space—
Yet nowhere thy living face!

Only now the lonesome blight,
Heavy day and haunted night.

All the light and music reft—
Only thought and memory left!

IV

Peace, fond mourner! This thy boon,—
Thou thyself must follow soon.

Peace,—and let repining go!
Peace,—for Fate will have it so.

Vainly now his praise is said;
Vain the garland for his head:

Yet is comfort's shadow cast
From the kindness of the past.

All my love could do to cheer
Warmed his heart when he was here.

Honor's plaudit, Friendship's vow
Did not coldly wait till now.

Oh, my comrade, oh, my friend,
If this parting be the end,

Yet I hold my life divine,
To have known a soul like thine:

And I hush the low lament
In submission, penitent.

Still the sun is in the skies:
He sets—but I have seen him rise!

XI.

OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Suggestion has frequently been made that I should write an Autobiography,—a kind of composition which is sometimes found deeply interesting, but from which I find myself inclined to shrink. It seldom happens to anybody to have such a story to tell as that of Benjamin Franklin or that of William Gifford, or to possess such stores of knowledge and experience as Gibbon was able to communicate, or such recollections as those that enrich the opulent pages of Henry Crabb Robinson. It is, however, possible that a narrative of my experience, from the time when, as a poor boy, I gathered blue-berries on the rocky hills back of Gloucester, or rambled, with other barefooted vagrants, on the wharves of Boston, till this day of active labor as a veteran of letters, might find a little favor; and perhaps it will, one day, be written; for I have seen and

known many persons and things of exceptional interest, and it would be easily possible for me to dilate upon my remembrance of notable incidents and of famous men whom I saw in my boyhood and youth,—that time which now seems so distant, that time of dream and drift and thoughtless enjoyment. Channing, the saint-like preacher, pale and thin, standing in his pulpit, and, even to my childish eyes, an object of awe; Story, the great jurist, riding in the long omnibus that plied between Cambridge and Boston, and talking with the passengers; the funeral procession of John Quincy Adams, as, with the black coffin exposed to view, it wound its slow way through Boston streets, to the wailing music of the Dead March. Polk, the President, in his carriage, with long-drawn escort, making triumphal progress, bowing right and left to the shouting multitude; Father Taylor, in his Bethel, rugged and vehement, preaching to sailors, and, as it happened, to me, a sailor's boy; Gough, the stentorian orator of Temperance, who certainly terrified one of his auditors, and probably many others, by his simulation of drunken delirium;

the festal adornment of the city, and the general joy of the people, when the Cochituate Water was introduced for common use; the exceeding horror attendant on the discovery of Professor Webster's murder of Dr. Parkman, in the Medical College; Junius Booth, that meteor of tragedy, whom I beheld as Pescara, and trembled to behold; Daniel Webster, most imperial of American statesmen, uttering his clarion tones from the portico of the old Revere House; Shaw, the august and venerable Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, presiding in his place, often apparently slumberous, but always really alert, watchful, and aware of everything around him; the acclaim that hailed the laying of the first Atlantic cable,—to celebrate which event, indeed, I wrote a song, that was sung by a vast audience in the Music Hall; Theodore Parker, the honest but virulent apostle of liberty, addressing a great multitude, in the temple where he preached, and denouncing Daniel Webster with bitterest vituperation; Rufus Choate, the most magnificent, wonderful, and inspiring of orators, pouring forth the diamond torrent of his

entrancing eloquence from the platform of storied Faneuil Hall,—those are a few of the images and scenes that crowd, in wild disorder, upon my recollection, when I think of vanished years. There is more display of enterprise in the life of To-Day than there was in the life of Yesterday; but the Past, as I recall it, was not devoid of action, and it was illustrious with the presence of great persons who, to the eyes of age, seem unmatched in the Present. There would be much to say, but at this moment a fleeting glimpse must suffice of good fellows of a day long past, who once brightened my life with the sunshine of their genius, kindness, and humor, and gained my affection, and, by me, are not forgotten.

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY

One of the blithest of those companions, as good and kind a man as ever lived, was the humorist *Arthur Sketchley*. That was his pen-name, and he was commonly known by it, but, in writing to me, he generally signed his actual name, which was George Rose. His personality was exceedingly interesting, and he possessed that

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY

George Rose

extraordinary faculty of humor which manifests itself by making its possessor intrinsically funny. He was a stalwart, handsome Englishman, of an aspect at once grave and jovial. His manner was dignified yet gentle. His voice was rich and sympathetic, and, beneath the facetious demeanor that he often, and to all appearance unconsciously, assumed, there was a reverent spirit, a solemn sense of duty, and a conscientious purpose to use his faculty of humor for the public good. The character with which he chose to invest himself, assuming it both as a writer and an impersonator, was that of a garrulous female named Mrs. Martha Brown, a representative, in many respects, of the average, conventional, middle-class English mind. He first made it known in 1863 in London. His method was to subject scenes and incidents of the passing hour,—the popular resorts, the popular fads, and occasionally the popular plays and novels, the proceedings of the fashionable world, and the manners of the multitude,—to the shrewd observation and pungent comment of that loquacious dame, and to cause her to talk about those subjects, in a rambling way and cockney

dialect. In doing that he caused Mrs. Brown,—"a party in the name of Martha,"—to reveal herself as a woman of large domestic experience, sound judgment, good sense, and good feeling; a woman appreciative of the comforts of life, but acquainted also with its trials and sorrows; and, especially, a woman essentially and naturally humorous, yet completely unconscious of her gift of humor. In a remote way the character might have been suggested to Rose by the Mrs. Nickleby of Dickens, but probably it was a study of actual life. Mrs. Nickleby is artificial, silly, and tedious. Mrs. Brown is natural, sensible, and entertaining; and her inexhaustible vocabulary, blending truth, ridicule, sense, kindness, and unexpected felicity of illustration with a tangle of words, is delightfully comic.

Rose came to America in the autumn of 1867 and gave public entertainments in New York and a few other cities, in the character of Mrs. Brown. He did not wear feminine attire, but appeared in the customary evening dress, speaking without manuscript, and, by dint of facile, suggestive impersonation, giving to his auditors a clear and

complete mental image of a voluble, elderly Englishwoman of an eccentric order. As acting the achievement was unique and extraordinary. By the American audiences, however, Mrs. Brown was not understood, and her clever and amiable representative did not long remain in America. In England, on the other hand, Mrs. Brown appeared before more than a thousand audiences, in many cities of the kingdom, and every one of them was delighted. In Australia, also, she met with great favor. Rose was the author of several comedies, some of which were successfully produced and all of which are good. He died in London, at No. 96 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, on November 13, 1882, aged 55, and was buried in Brompton Cemetery,—that peculiarly forlorn place of sepulture, which is so populous with memorials of men and women distinguished in service of the arts.

One of Rose's marked peculiarities was excessive candor. He uttered disapprobation of many things and persons, sometimes sincerely, at other times in a playful, whimsical spirit,—for he was prone to mystification; as when, in a season of

much Shakespearean revival, he would cause Mrs. Brown to exclaim, "Shakespeare again! O, that dreadful man!" One of his intimate friends was Charles Mathews, the famous and ever delightful comedian; and I have heard that as often as they met it was the custom of Mathews to forestall his comrade's impending censure by exclaiming: 'Now, Rose, *damn everything*! and have it done with,—and let's go to breakfast." Rose was not, essentially, a censorious man, but conventionality,—the everlasting sameness of persons, thoughts, talk, and customs,—made him impatient and prompted him to satire. When in New York, in the season of 1867-'68, he was often in my company, and he was the cause of much mirth. One morning he came to see me, at the office of a paper called "The Weekly Review," of which, amid a multiplicity of occupations, I was the managing editor (for one of the most accomplished and amiable of men, Theodore Hagen, long ago dead); and, being in joyous spirits, he suddenly favored me with a signal example of his humorous aptitude and his propensity for playful satire. A public reading from

Shakespeare, by the famous Fanny Kemble, had occurred, on the previous evening, at Steinway Hall, and, as sympathetically related by the morning papers, it had been interrupted, at a critical moment, by the late, and, naturally, vexatious, arrival of one of the distinguished performer's female auditors. Fanny Kemble, as is known to persons who know the truth about her, while possessed of intellect, ability, and a grand manner, was an arrogant, imperious woman, somewhat of the old Duchess of Marlborough order, and the interruption of her recital, which happened to be that of a lurid apostrophe by King Lear, caused her to pause and to fix a baleful gaze of fury on the belated member of her congregation. According to one of her newspaper worshippers, "the angry spot did glow on Cæsar's cheek." On hearing a remark about that incident Rose instantly assumed the character of Mrs. Brown At The Play, and, pretending that the disturbance had been caused by that worthy dame's incursion into the formidable Fanny's audience, he improvised a performance as fine with truth and humor as anything of the kind

could be,—a performance such as the most glowing of theatrical records attribute to the versatile John Edwin, the incomparable Theodore Hook, or the irresistible Burton. "That ther' Miss Kimbil," he exclaimed, in conclusion; "and a brazen 'ussey as she was, a sittin' in a black velvet gownd and a-glarin' at me! 'Rumble your belly full!' she sings out; 'blow wind!' which I don't 'old vith no sich langwige, and me a respectable widdy, and peppermint drops is good for it."

ARTEMUS WARD

Rose, as might have been expected, was cordially sympathetic with the American humorist *Artemus Ward,* and he was foremost in greeting him, with glad welcome, on his arrival in London. They became intimate friends, and it has been said that Artemus, when on his death-bed, asked Rose to obtain for him the ministrations of a Roman Catholic priest. Knowing both those men, intimately, and thinking of that death-bed, I surmise that it was Rose, not Ward, who suggested the summons of the Romish ecclesiastic. Rose had been educated for the priesthood; he

was devout; he lived and died in the Roman Catholic faith. He, naturally, would have suggested the presence of a confessor at the bedside of his dying friend, and he would have considered that proceeding conscientious and necessary. *Artemus Ward,* Charles Farrar Browne, was a good man, but he was not a sectarian in religious belief. My acquaintance with Artemus began when he came to New York, from the West, in the autumn of 1860, and began to write for "Vanity Fair," of which paper, subsequently, he was, for a short time, the editor. He was comically eccentric, equally as a character and a writer. His person was tall and thin; his face aquiline; his carriage buoyant; his demeanor joyous and eager. His features were irregular; his eyes of a light blue color and, in expression, merry and gentle. His movements were rapid and inelegant. His voice was fresh and clear, and, though not sympathetic, distinctly communicative of a genial spirit. His attire was rich and gay,—the attire of a man of fashion. He possessed, in an extraordinary degree, the faculty of maintaining a solemn composure of countenance while

making comic or ridiculous statements,—as when, in his first lecture in New York, he mentioned the phenomenal skill of his absent pianist, who, he said, "always wore mittens when playing the piano,"—and he could impart an irresistible effect of humor by means of a felicitous, unexpected inflection of tone. There is little in his published writings that fully explains the charm he exercised in conversation and in public speaking. The prominent characteristics of those writings are broadly farcical humor, sportive levity, and comic inconsequence,—as when, in describing his visit to the grim Tower of London, he mentioned that he saw the "Traitor's Gate," and thought that as many as twenty traitors might go through it abreast. The charm of *Artemus Ward* was that of a kindly, droll personality, compact of spontaneous mirth and winning sweetness. It is an attribute that words can but faintly suggest.

In the days of our intimacy I sometimes urged upon the attention of Artemus the importance of a serious purpose in humorous writings, especially commending to him the example of Thack-

ARTEMUS WARD

Charles Farrar Browne

eray. Those monitions of mine were always gravely accepted, but with a demure glance and a twinkle of the blue eyes that seemed to betoken more amusement than heed. Late one night,—in fact, about three o'clock in the morning,—when we had been merry-making with gay companions, we repaired, upon his invitation, to the hotel in which he then lodged, the Jones House, at the southeast corner of Broadway and Great Jones Street, New York, a pleasant abode, long ago demolished. On reaching his room he hastily summoned a servant, and, after ordering that copious refreshment should be provided, he earnestly inquired, with an imposing aspect of solemnity, an aspect by which I was completely deceived, whether it would be possible to arouse the landlord. The servant hesitated.

"It is late, sir," he said.

"I know it is late," replied Artemus; "but I have a message for him, of the utmost importance. It is urgent, and I am sure he will be glad to receive it. Do you think you could wake him?"

"Yes, sir; I could wake him, if you"——

"Well—I will see that you are not blamed. Will you remember what I say, and be careful to deliver the message exactly as I tell you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, give him my compliments; be sure you mention my name; he's an old friend of mine; he'll be delighted to hear from me. Wake him, and tell him,—and speak *distinctly,* will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell him, with my very kindest regards, that —*the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.*"

Verbal record of that bit of frolic conveys only a hint of the skill with which the humorist maintained his gravity and the abounding glee with which he exulted over the accomplishment of his playfully mischievous design. That was one way of signifying to me his assent to the proposition that humor can be made to convey a serious truth.

I never saw Artemus after he went to England. He was warmly welcomed in London,—where he became widely popular, by reason of his comic entertainment, given at the Egyptian Hall, and also by reason of his contributions to "Punch"; and he gained many affectionate

friends. Among those friends were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Millward and Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Burgess, from whom, when I first visited England, in 1877, I derived much information as to his London life. Millward related an incident that is signally indicative of Ward's character. The humorist had been overwhelmed with English hospitality,—a kindness which, once awakened, knows no bounds; he had entered with eager zest into the festivities of the convivial Savage Club and of other kindred coteries, and, consequently, his health was beginning to break. Mrs. Millward, equally sensible and kind, warned him of his danger. "You must," she repeatedly said to him, "*learn to say 'No.'*" The home of Millward was in the northern part of London, far from the Strand and therefore distant from Bohemian haunts. "One night, between midnight and morning, we were awakened," said Millward, recounting this occurrence, "by a loud knocking at our door; and, on descending, I found Artemus there, in evening dress, unusually composed and serious. Of course I welcomed him, though at a loss to understand the cause of his untimely call.

He urgently requested the presence of Mrs. Millward, and would take no denial,—having, as he gravely declared, a most important communication to impart, that only *she* could appreciate. Yielding to his earnest importunity, I persuaded Mrs. Millward to join us. The moment she appeared he greeted her with impressive solemnity. 'It is *done,*' he said; 'I knew *you* would wish to hear of it *at once.* I have been at the Savage all evening, *and I have said No!*' The result," added Millward, "was that we sat up the rest of the night, and made a feast of it,—in which, it is needless to add, he said '*Yes!*'"

Artemus died, in the South Western Railway Hotel at Southampton, on March 6, 1867, aged 32. A short time before his death a friend tried to persuade him to swallow some medicine that he was reluctant to take. "I would do *anything* for *you,*" urged that affectionate person. "Would you?" said Artemus. "Well—then *you* take it!" His body rested for a short time in Kensal Green Cemetery, London, but, ultimately it was brought home and buried at Waterford, Maine, his birthplace. Among the tributes which then appeared

in print none is more touching than a poem which has been attributed to that great master of lyrical verse, the lamented Algernon Charles Swinburne, but which was written by James Rhoades, of Haslemere, Surrey, and published in a London paper. One stanza of it is here given:

> He came, with a heart full of gladness,
> From the glad-hearted world of the West;
> Won our laughter, but not with mere madness;
> Spake and joked with us, not in mere jest;
> For the Man in our hearts lingered after,
> When the merriment died from our ears,
> And those who were loudest in laughter
> Are silent in tears.

BOHEMIA AGAIN

In his New York days Artemus consorted with my old Bohemian companions, and the thought of him brings with it a thought of them. In earlier chapters of reminiscence I have adverted to that period and that group of writers, with the purpose of providing an authentic record, however brief and incomplete, of an interesting literary episode and a remarkable, though accidental, coterie of authors, the writings of some of whom

have survived and seem destined to endure. George Arnold, Fitz-James O'Brien, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Walt Whitman, Charles Dawson Shanly, Charles D. Gardette, and Nathan G. Shepherd are names that shine, with more or less lustre, in the scroll of American poets, and recurrence to their period affords opportunity for correction of errors concerning it, which have been conspicuously made. On January 13, 1909, a brilliant assemblage convened at the Carnegie Lyceum, New York, to participate in a public service commemorative of the loved and honored poet Edmund Clarence Stedman, and speeches were delivered making allusion to the literary environment of his youth, the time when he began as a writer, and the Bohemian circle of which erroneously he had been supposed, and was then declared, to have been a member. That distinguished man of letters, whose death befell on January 18, 1908, was, in 1860, associated with "The New York World,"—which was started in that year, beginning as a religious newspaper, —and although he was acquainted with a few members of the Bohemian group then existent, he

was not associated with it. He knew George Arnold, having met him, in boyhood, at a place called "The Phalanx," at Strawberry Farms, New Jersey, and there is, among his poems, a tribute to the memory of that delightful comrade and charming poet. He also knew Aldrich and Whitman; but with the other persons of that company he had no acquaintance. The literary circle to which Stedman obtained access, and which he pleased and adorned, was that which comprised Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Mrs. Stoddard (the brilliant Elizabeth Barstow), George Henry Boker, and Lorimer Graham,—a circle distinct from that of the contemporary Bohemia, and not propitious to it. Stoddard, indeed, who held an official post in the New York Custom House and who was accustomed to contribute to various publications of that day, had made the acquaintance of Henry Clapp, and I remember that occasionally he wrote for Clapp's "Saturday Press," and had difficulty, not unusual, in obtaining payment; for the resources of the paper were so slight that its continuance, from week to week, was a marvel. One day Clapp and

I, having locked the doors of the " Press " office, in order to prevent the probable access of creditors, were engaged in serious and rather melancholy conference as to the obtainment of money with which to pay the printer, when suddenly there came a loud, impatient knocking upon the outer door, and my senior, by a warning gesture, enjoined silence. The sound of a grumbling voice was then audible, and, after a while, the sound of footsteps retreating down the stairs. For several minutes Clapp did not speak but continued to smoke and listen, looking at me with a serious aspect. Then, removing the pipe from his lips, he softly murmured, " 'Twas the voice of *the Stoddard*—I heard him complain!" That incident sufficiently indicates the embarrassing circumstances under which the paper struggled through the twenty-six months of its existence. Some of its contributors were glad to furnish articles for nothing, being friendly toward the establishment of an absolutely independent critical paper, a thing practically unknown in those days. Among those friendly contributors were Henry Giles, Charles T. Congdon, Edward Howland (by

RICHARD H. STODDARD

Photograph by Sarony

whom the paper had been projected), Brownlee Brown, C. D. Shanly, and Ada Clare. T. B. Aldrich was connected with "The Saturday Press" only during the first three months of its existence, and he had not, at any time, any pecuniary investment in it, so that his biographer's remark about his having "taken the failure with a light heart" seems comic.

A point to be noted in making the literary chronicle of those days is that Taylor, Stoddard, Stedman, Boker, Curtis, Ludlow, and others whose names have been commingled with those of Henry Clapp's Bohemian associates were not only not affiliated with that coterie but were distinct from it, and, in some instances, were inimical to it. O'Brien was at one time intimate with Taylor and Stoddard, but the intimacy did not continue. After I collected the literary remains of O'Brien,—Poems and Stories, published in 1881,—the most censorious review of them that appeared was, I remember, written by Stoddard, in "The New York Tribune." The time, 1859-'60, was one of turbulence; for the whole land was seething on the eve of the Civil

War, and animosities were as common as friendships. One feature of it, and that peculiarly interesting to men of letters, was the survival of ties that bound it to the period that is covered by Poe's account of "The Literati." Epes Sargent and George P. Morris were known to me; N. P. Willis had accepted and published, with cordial commendation, one of my juvenile poems; Fitz-Greene Halleck, William Wallace, Cornelius Mathews, and Thomas Dunn English were living and writing, and I often saw them; and many times I talked with the tart, sprightly, satiric Charles F. Briggs,—long ago at rest, in the old Moravian Cemetery, in Staten Island. Those writers, with many others, figure in the pages of Poe, and it is both significant and pleasant to recall that Poe, often and harshly censured for his criticism of his contemporaries, was the first authoritative voice to recognize the excellence of Bayard Taylor; hailing him, 1849, as "unquestionably the most terse, glowing, and vigorous of all our poets."

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

Stedman had been known to me as a poet for some time before we met. Our acquaintance began in 1862, and it speedily ripened into a friendship that was never marred, notwithstanding our variant opinions as to literary matters and our invariably frank and explicit criticism of one another as votaries of the Muse. That good old story of Gil Blas and the Archbishop, so highly prized by Dean Swift, cleverly enough inculcates the policy of critical lenity or reserve; but it is not true that every man likes to be flattered; and, moreover, that friendship which cannot bear plain speech and good counsel is not friendship at all. One of my most agreeable recollections of early friends in the literary vocation,—such as Francis A. Durivage, James T. Fields, Epes Sargent, Edwin P. Whipple, Benjamin P. Shillaber, and George Lunt,—is that the custom of perfectly candid criticism prevailed among them, without even the least surmise that it would give pain or be deemed unkind. Stedman, in his intercourse with authors, whom he knew by the score, may

have had his patience severely tried. I do not know. I know that in his intercourse with me he was always truthful as well as considerate. There came a time, in the fulness of years, and while he yet lived, when I had the opportunity of bearing my testimony to his fine genius, his lovely character, and his varied and precious achievement. On December 6, 1900, to signalize his completion and publication of that massive and splendid book "An American Anthology," the Authors' Club, of New York, gave a feast in his honor, on which occasion I delivered the address that here follows:

> Whoso conquers the world,
> Winning its riches and fame,
> Comes to the evening at last,
> The sunset of three score years,
> Confessing that love was real,
> All the rest was a dream.

Those are the words of the loved and honored Poet around whom you have gathered to-night, to congratulate him on the fulfilment of a great work and to crown him with the laurel of a perfect renown. They sound the keynote of this occasion, and no word of mine could make it

sound more true. He has lived worthy of love; he possesses it; and love is the crown of life.

I have listened here to the sweetest of all music, the music of the voice of friendship; and now, as I gaze over this brilliant company,—"the choice and master spirits" of American literature in our capital,—and consider the motive of this assemblage and the emotion that thrills every heart, my thoughts go back to a memorable personal experience, nearly fifty years ago, when first, consciously, I worshipped at the shrine of ideal intellect and beauty. It was a lovely night, in May. The river Charles, flowing dreamily through the meadows of Cambridge, glimmered in burnished darkness under the faint light of the stars. The winds were hushed. The soft air was laden with the fragrance of lilac and woodbine. At some distance the clock in the old church tower was striking midnight; and I stood at the gate of Longfellow, whither I had come, a stranger and a pilgrim, to lay my hand upon the latch that the poet's hand had touched. Strange and wild is the heart of youth; but, unperverted by selfish ambition and unembittered by worldly

distrust, the heart of youth is true. Many a time since then it has been my fortune to meet with great authors of the Present and to stand at the shrines of illustrious authors of the Past. Longfellow, Holmes, and Wilkie Collins were my dear personal friends. I have clasped hands with Charles Dickens, and Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold. I have made a pilgrimage to Sloperton Cottage, and worshipped in Bromham church, and stood at the grave of that wonderful singer, Thomas Moore, "the poet of all circles and the idol of his own." I have been privileged to roam in the halls and cloisters and gardens of Newstead Abbey, and to kneel, in awe and reverence, beside the tomb of Byron, in Hucknall church. I have stood in the old Castle Street study of Sir Walter Scott, in Edinburgh, and held in my hands the original manuscript of his Journal, and looked upon the almost illegible tracery of the last words that fell from his immortal pen. And, many a time, by night and by day, I have mused in Stratford church, and heard, or seemed to hear, the angel echoes, as from another world, that float around the sacred dust of

Shakespeare. But never have I felt more deeply than in my boyhood's dream and rapture, on that magical night at the gate of Longfellow, the glamour and the glory of poetic achievement and poetic renown.

There were clouds, now and then, over the landscape, no doubt; but, in the retrospect, poetic sentiment gladdens and glorifies all the Past. Looking back to the middle of the last century and to the old, scholastic city of Cambridge, where some of my early days were spent, I see, as in a vision, a time when the world seemed gentler than now it is, and a place where action had fallen asleep. The broad, white streets were shaded with copious elms, willows, and silver-leaf maples. The houses were, mostly, isolated in gardens. The shining river Charles wound its sinuous way through broad reaches of golden marsh land,—still and solitary in the sunshine, save for the stir of rippling grass and the flight of a wandering gull. Once every hour the long omnibus rolled lazily through the village street, on its drowsy journey to neighboring Boston. Once every day the noiseless tenor of life was faintly stirred by

the arrival of "The Boston Transcript." The bell was rung, in the church tower, at 12, and the curfew at 9. At intervals the voice of the lecturer became audible,—Emerson, or Phillips, or Parker, or Beecher, or Chapin, or Osgood, or Whipple, or Curtis, or Giles. Once I heard the elder Dana, the author of "The Buccaneer,"—a slight, strange, gray, pallid man, with dark, mysterious, awe-stricken eyes,—discourse on "Hamlet." Sometimes, rambling among the quaint red college buildings at Harvard, the gazer might descry the decorous, stately, sable figure of Edward Everett; or the tall, shambling Felton, with spectacled nose and kindly, preoccupied face; or Pierce, the great professor of mathematics, with his long hair and hirsute visage; or the rough, surly Greek tutor Sophocles, in his cynic mood, which was incessant, and his ancient cloak, which seemed to be perpetual; or the manly presence and thoughtful countenance of Lowell; or the handsome, comfortable Agassiz, with his beaming face, and dark, observant, benevolent eyes, so intellectual and so sweet. There also might be seen

the ambient Theophilus Parsons, happy in his legal erudition, happier still in his Swedenborgian faith and his sunny, cheerful, self-confident temper, that nothing could sadden. And there, sometimes, came the diminutive but erect, sprightly, vital Holmes, one of the blithest spirits, surely, that ever walked the earth. As I think of those times and persons,—serene in a halo of poetic distance and reverie,—I breathe once more the fragrant syringa and lilac in the half-forgotten springtime that never can return, and hear the patter of the falling leaf in burnished autumn woods of Long Ago.

The wild ardor of youth is chastened and sobered as years drift away, but, if once it has been felt, the emotion of delight in the achievement of poetic genius is never quite extinguished. No realm of memory yields so much to comfort the heart and cheer the mind as the realm that is peopled with the Poets of the Past,—that realm to which your honored guest, throwing wide the portals of song, has made the avenue of access so easy and so pleasant for the generations that are to follow him, and in which he will ever re-

main a noble and an honored figure. From "Bohemia" to "The Blameless Prince"; from "Old Brown" to "The Heart of New England"; from the unique, romantic, tender ballad of "Montagu" to the wild and pathetic rhapsody of "The Lord's Day Gale"; from the Bryant Ode to the gossamer, lace-like, exquisite loveliness of "The Carib Sea"; from "Alice of Monmouth,"—with its thrilling, triumphant dirge,—to the inspired and beautiful "Ariel" that commemorates Shelley, the same pure poetic thought and feeling flow steadily onward, and the same golden music sounds,—the music of a noble mind and a passionate and tender heart, by nature consecrated to the service of beauty, and, therefore, to the supreme welfare of mankind. The Poet is not, and must not be, a teacher. He does not know, and he need not ask, in what way his spirit affects the world. Longfellow has told you that he found his wandering song in the heart of a friend. Emerson has told you that the sexton, ringing his church bell, knows not that the great Napoleon, far off among the Alps, has reined his horse and paused to listen. The songs

of the poet are sifted into the minds of men as the sunshine is sifted into the trees of the forest. In that way the Muse of Stedman has become a loved companion to thousands of responsive souls; in that way his influence has wrought and his solid fame has grown. I sometimes think that the deadliest foe of creative impulse in poetry is the faculty of criticism, and that our poetic literature will never, as a whole, acquire the opulent vitality, bloom, and color of old English poetry, until our authors cease to be self-conscious and critical, and,—as that rare poet Richard Henry Stoddard so often and so happily has done,—yield themselves fully to their emotions. But the faculty of criticism, as Stedman used it, becomes creative. Never have I found, in any of his pages, a narrow doctrine or a blighting word. Genius, he has said, is something that comes without effort, and yet impels its possessor to heroic labor. No better word was ever said of it, nor was ever a more explicit example given of it than this which we now contemplate and acclaim, in the splendid fruition of his inspired, laborious, and grandly faithful life.

It is true, as our friend has said, that a "breath of poetry is worth a breeze of comment." It was once my dream that I also might contribute something to the poetry of my native land; some strain of beauty "that the world would not willingly let die." That dream has vanished, with many other dreams,—the fair beguilements with which young ambition is flattered by delusive hope,—and I can say, with old George Colman:

> My Muse and I, ere youth and spirits fled,
> Sat up together, many a night, no doubt;
> But now I've sent the poor old lass to bed,
> Because—because my fire is going out.

She does not always stay there. Sometimes, long after midnight, I find her in my arm-chair, in the chimney corner, and together we look into the embers and think of our old friends: and this is what we should like to say to one of them, most honored and most prized:

> Comrade and friend! what tribute shall I render?
> Roses and lilies bloom no more for me,
> And naught remains of Fancy's squandered splendor
> Save marish flowers that fringe the sombre sea.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

But were each word a rose, each thought a blessing,
Each prayer a coronal of gems divine,
Honor and love and perfect trust confessing,
My words, my thoughts, my prayers should all be thine

For thou hast kept the faith: thy soul, undaunted,
Whatever storms might round thee rage and roll,
By one celestial passion still enchanted,
Has held its course right onward to its goal.

No sordid aim, no worldly greed, beguiling,
Could ever wile thy constant heart astray;
No vine-clad, Circean, Cyprian Muses, smiling,
Allure thy footsteps down the primrose way.

Thou hast not basely gathered thrift with fawning,
Nor worn a laurel that thou hast not won;
But, in thy zenith hour as in thy dawning,
The good thy nature willed thy hand has done.

On thy calm front the waves of trouble, broken,
Have backward surged and left thee regnant still:
Nor tempests of the soul nor griefs unspoken
Have e'er had power to shake thy steadfast will.

Thy glory cannot wane,—for were thy singing
Stilled at its source, through all the domes of fame,
In one great organ burst, superbly ringing,
The whole poetic choir would chant thy name.

Thy soul is music: from its deeps o'erflowing,—
With the glad freedom of the wild-bird's wing,
Where icy gales o'er sunlit seas are blowing,—
It sings because divinely born to sing.

No stain is on thy banner: grandly streaming,
Its diamond whiteness leads the tuneful host,
Forever in the front of honor beaming,
And they that know thee best must love thee most.

So rest: thy regal throne thou hast ascended:
The standards blaze, the golden trumpets ring,
And in one voice our loyal hearts are blended—
God bless the Poet and God save the King!

THE ORNITHORHYNCUS CLUB

There was a notable group of writers and artists in New York, of earlier date than the Pfaff Bohemian coterie, comprising, among its many members (as I heard, for I was not associated with it), Francis Henry Temple Bellew, Charles Gayler, William North, Sol Eytinge, Charles G. Rosenberg, Charles B. Seymour, and Fitz-James O'Brien, all of whom are dead. That society, unlike the Pfaff coterie, was, after a fortuitous fashion, organized, and it had a

name,—the remarkable name of the Ornithorhyncus Club. In New Guinea there is a four-footed animal, having a bill like that of a duck, known to the inhabitants of that country as the Mulligong, but, scientifically, designated the *Ornithorhyncus paradoxus,* or Duck-Billed Platypus. The singular aspect of that quadruped had attracted the amused attention of Bellew, an excellent artist; and when, as happened, a German widow, poor, and wishful to retrieve her once opulent fortune, opened a restaurant, in Spring Street, and wanted a name for it, he suggested that of the eccentric Australasian beast, and merrily persuaded her to adopt it; and he painted a sign for her, which was hung in front of the house, representing the Ornithorhyncus in the act of smoking a pipe, while grasping a glass of foaming beer. At that facetious sign the writers and artists constituting the Ornithorhyncus Club habitually met, for the pastime of talking, singing, joking, drinking beer, and smoking church-warden pipes. Many of their songs were composed among themselves,—one, written by O'Brien and sung to an air from the

ever popular "Fra Diavolo," having been an especial favorite.

CHARLES B. SEYMOUR

In that group an especially attractive personality was that of Charles B. Seymour, with whom, later, I had the good fortune of friendly companionship. Seymour, who was an Englishman,—born in London, December 13, 1829,—came to America at the age of twenty, established his residence in New York, and, at first, obtained employment as a teacher. Later he became associated with the editorial staff of "The New York Times," which was started in 1850, and when first we met he held the office of musical and dramatic reviewer for that paper, a position that he continued to occupy till his death, on May 18, 1869. Some of the qualifications for such an office are learning, judgment, taste, sensibility, discernment, a kind heart, and the habit of incessant industry. Seymour possessed them, and during a period of fourteen years, from 1855 to 1869, he recorded the movement of musical and dramatic art in New York, advocat-

ing right principles, fostering worthy endeavor, recognizing merit, and continuously exerting a good influence,—the rather that his learning was tinged with playful humor and his incisive style was felicitous with lightness of touch. Few writers have the equanimity and patience to use the critical faculty in a thoughtful, thorough, conscientious, impartial manner, and singers and actors are indeed fortunate who find themselves recognized in the press with an intelligent appreciation not less sympathetic and liberal than accurate and just. Seymour was not content with appreciating artists for himself; he labored to interpret them to others. That service, fully performed, imparts a measure of permanence to those artistic achievements which, otherwise, are wholly ephemeral. The entranced listener to music or the enthralled spectator of acting is usually content with declaring that the one is magnificent or the other superb: the efficient critic must justify his verdict of admiration by exact analysis of the effect that has been produced and of the cause that has produced it, and, in thus declaring the reasons for his judgment, he

must define and designate the powers of an artist and the method by which they have been used. That professional obligation Seymour always strove to meet, and therefore his writing was a benefit to his readers.

But it was not only the talent of Seymour that commended him to the liking of those sensitive persons, the singers and the actors, of whom he wrote, and to the esteem of his fellow-workers in the press. His temperament was sweet and his life was gentle. He was simple and sincere. He took his part in the everyday work of life, and he did his best to make it worthy. Continuity of effort in composition had made him an exceptionally facile writer, so that his pen never halted, and in emergencies he was neither dazed nor perplexed. His style was clear and terse, and a glow of spontaneous mirth often played along the silver threads of his thought. His writings in the press,—" a great-sized monster of ingratitudes," which has, in many countries, devoured the product of many brilliant minds,—are lost and gone. He was a correspondent for " The New York Times " at the Paris Exposition, in

1868, where his services as a member of the American Commission were recognized by the presentation to him of a medal from the Emperor of France. One memorial of him, though, remains in something like a permanent form—a volume of biography that he wrote, called " Self-Made Men," published in 1858.

WILLIAM NORTH

Among my relics there is a letter addressed by Seymour to Frank Bellew, not only containing authentic biographical detail, but conveying a peculiarly sympathetic and winning intimation of the character of its writer:

158 Nassau Street, N. Y., November 17, 1854.

Dear Bellew:

You are long ere this acquainted with the melancholy termination of our poor friend North's career. He left a letter for you, which has been forwarded. Other particulars of the event were published in the " Daily Times " and other papers. The cause of death was love, not poverty. He impressed that on me, the night before the catastrophe. I little thought that the threat he uttered then,—as he had done many times before,—would so surely be carried into execution.

It is to me, and will be to you, a source of inexpressible

consolation that we, at least, of all his friends, understood appreciated, and loved him to the last. To the time of his death I valued him as a brother, and cannot recall an angry word that ever passed his lips or mine. Poor fellow; my heart bleeds when I think of his sad, sad end.

I wish to relieve you on one point where you will, I am sure, experience uneasiness. Everything that propriety and love demanded has been done. The corpse now lies in the vault of Greenwood Cemetery. I have not interred it, because I thought it necessary to write to England, to consult North's relations, before doing so. I ask nothing from them, only the privilege of honoring my poor friend's remains here, if they do not wish them there.

A great amount of sympathy has been elicited by the event, but I have not permitted it to interfere with my action in the matter. Excepting myself and Underhill, there was no other friend here from whom North would have accepted a favor. I have not allowed any one to offend his memory by offering assistance now. Underhill insisted, and he alone participated.

I have ninety days privilege of the vault. If I do not hear from England in that time, I shall purchase a plot of ground, and suitably mark the spot where lies a man of genius, a gentleman, and a kind, brave, well loved friend.

With best wishes for your happiness,

I am, dear Bellew,

Yours in sorrow,

C. Seymour.

More than fifty years have passed since the death of William North. Not widely known in

his own time, he is not at all known now: yet his writings, notwithstanding indications of a visionary, unstable brain, possess poetical enthusiasm and are a part of literature, while his personal story has a place in literary annals. Under the name of *Dudley Mondel,* he has, to some extent, sketched himself, in his novel called " The Slave of the Lamp,"—existent now, though long out of print, as " The Man of the World." He says that he was born at sea, and that he was educated partly in England and partly in Germany. In boyhood he wrote a novel called " Anti-Coningsby," for the purpose of controverting the political views of the then young Disraeli. He came from London to New York when about twenty-five years old, and he wrote industriously for "Graham's Magazine," " Harper's Magazine," " The Knickerbocker Magazine," " The Whig Review," and other periodical publications. Among his stories are " The Phantom World," " The Usurer's Gift," " My Ghost," and " The Man That Married His Grandmother." North's fantastic, almost delirious " Slave of the Lamp " is not for a moment comparable with " Treasure

Island," but it contains a remote premonition of that remarkable tale, in its account of a voyage to an auriferous isle, somewhere in the Antarctic zone, on which the adventurous *Dudley Mondel,* the hero of the novel, and his singularly miscellaneous companions found much gold, and on which, deep in the crater of a vast conical mountain, they discovered a broad lake of quicksilver, into which one of the group fell and was converted into a silver statue, reposing on the surface of the lake.

The woman for hopeless love of whom North committed suicide was, in after years, known to me, and certainly she was beautiful enough to have inspired idolatrous passion in the breast of even a marble monument. The fatal, crazy act was done on the night of November 14, 1854. The unfortunate man drank prussic acid and fell dead, across his bed. Henry Clapp, who knew him well, told me that it was one of North's peculiarities that, in whatever room he chanced to be, at night, he could not bear to have the door stand open, even an inch: yet the door of the room in which he died was found to be standing ajar

by persons who, at morning, discovered the corpse. One of the letters that he left has drifted into my possession. It is written in blue ink, and it is, indeed, a ghastly souvenir of a ruined life:

To F. T. Bellew and Mrs. Bellew.

Dear Friends:—May you be happy! Do not regret me. I am not fit for this world. I fly to a better life. I am calm and brave and hopeful.

Ever affectionately and truly,

W. North.

SOL EYTINGE

A man of original and deeply interesting character, an artist of exceptional facility, possessed of a fine imagination and great warmth of feeling, passed from the world, in the death of my old companion of many years, Sol Eytinge,—an event which befell on March 26, 1905, at Bayonne, New Jersey. In his prime as a draughtsman he was distinguished for the felicity of his invention, the richness of his humor, and the tenderness of his pathos. He had a keen wit and he was the soul of kindness and mirth. The aggregate of his works is large, but, individually, they are widely scattered. The most appropriate

pictures that have been made for illustration of the novels of Dickens,—pictures that are truly representative and free from the element of caricature,—are those made by Eytinge, and it is remembered that they gained the emphatic approval of the novelist. The portrait of Dickens that is included among the illustrations of this volume was made by Eytinge, and it is the best portrait existent of that great author,—because, while faithful to physical lineaments, it conveys expression of the mind and soul. The artist loved, reverenced, and understood the man whose semblance he had undertaken to create.

A life dedicated to " the serene and silent art " is seldom eventful. That of Sol Eytinge was exceptionally tranquil. He was born in Philadelphia, October 23, 1833, and there was educated. In June 1858 he was married, in Brooklyn, to Miss Margaret Winship,—Rev. Henry Ward Beecher performing the marriage service, and the American humorist Mortimer Thomson, whose pen-name was Q. K. Philander Doesticks, P. B., acting as groomsman; a clever writer and a good fellow, almost or quite forgotten now.

Sol's circle of artistic companionship, then and in after years, comprised Elihu Vedder, George H. Boughton, Cass Griswold, Charles Coleman, W. J. Hennessey, William J. Linton, Albert and William Waud, and A. V. S. Anthony,—names that tell their own bright story of fine achievement and honorable distinction. It was a gay company, and many a happy hour do I remember, of festive communion with it. Many of those old friends have passed away. Vedder and Coleman, veterans now, are dwelling at Capri, in Italy,—Vedder in the "Tower of the Four Winds," whereto I waft a greeting, across the world. The grave of Sol Eytinge is in New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City. His widow, who survives, in serene age, long ago made a name in letters, by reason of her exceptional humor and her expert invention, particularly as a writer for the young, and to think of her is to recall many a convivial occasion that her generous hospitality provided and that her kindness and her genial wit enriched.

The pictures that Eytinge made for embellishment of the poet Lowell's "Vision of Sir

Launfal" are especially significant of his sense of romantic atmosphere and his sympathetic perception of poetic ideals. He was a man of independent mind and genial temperament; he was devoted to the ministration of beauty; and his conduct and manners had the charm and simplicity of genius. He was very dear to me as a comrade, and so I give myself the pensive pleasure of gracing my pages with his name. Over his grave might well be written the lines that Dr. Johnson wrote, of Hogarth:

> The hand of him here torpid lies
> That drew the essential form of grace;
> Here closed in death the attentive eyes
> That saw the manners in the face.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

When I was a youth, dwelling in Cambridge, I sometimes saw James Russell Lowell and often heard of him, but I did not then possess the honor of an acquaintance with him. At the fireside of Longfellow I heard many kind words about absent friends and contemporary men of letters. Longfellow could be stern in rebuking faults and

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

condemning evil, but a gentle consideration for human weakness was one of the traits of his lovely character, and I observed that when he spoke of the absent he spoke kindly. His allusions to Lowell were frequent and affectionate. Having asked me, one evening, if I had ever seen Lowell, he exclaimed: "He is one of the manliest and noblest men that ever lived!" As he said this he rose and playfully imitated Lowell's erect, dauntless bearing and manner. Those words made an indelible impression on my mind, and Lowell has always lived in my memory as he was represented by Longfellow. I did not meet him until long afterward, in 1881, when he held the office of American Minister to the Court of Saint James's. Our meeting occurred at a festival in London. He manifested cordial kindness, and then and later he was thoughtful in doing courtesies. His appearance had undergone a marked change. He was no longer militant nor enthusiastic. His aspect was that of pensive dignity and intellectual concentration. He was invariably gentle, but he was only momentarily playful. From observation, from slight social

intercourse with him, and from letters that passed between us, I derived the impression that Lowell was a man who broadened and mellowed through every year of his life, and who was more deeply interesting and lovable in his age than in his youth. He died in 1891, in his seventy-third year. Poets, when personally encountered, often disappoint expectation, but Lowell was not a disappointment. Few men have been so generally attractive. He is not often mentioned as a poet, but frequently as an essayist, a moralist, and a reformer. If he had been born and reared in Old instead of New England, if his genius had been developed amid the venerable, imposing antiquities and exquisite rural beauties of that delicious country and clime, perhaps his poetic voice might have sounded a more alluring, decisive, triumphant note. Puritanical environment seems to have shaped his destiny, while the critical faculty, that all-devouring monster, seems to have hampered his creative impulse,—an experience not uncommon, in an age when everybody writes "criticism." But he was a great intellect, a potent moral force, a keen satirist, a critic both com-

prehensive and subtle, while the temperament of genius, combining aspiration and sensibility, invested him with inherent grace,—a quality which has been well designated as an impression of beauty that cannot be analyzed.

DONALD GRANT MITCHELL

I had thought of writing a comprehensive review of the field of early American Literature, as an appropriate prelude to my sketches of representative authors, of my own time, whom I have personally known; but I remembered that this had been thoroughly and admirably done by one who was long our literary chieftain, the wise and gentle Donald Grant Mitchell, in his book of "American Lands and Letters." It was my privilege to be a reader of Mitchell in early life, and for me his writings have not lost their fascinating charm. I did not meet him till he had sought the chimney nook of age, but for years he honored me with his regard, and I should grieve to lose any opportunity of paying my humble tribute to his memory. Mitchell died, at Edgewood, December 15, 1908. His excellent book about American

writers who flourished during the troubled formative period that extends from the time of Captain John Smith to that of the advent of the poet Bryant is minute without being either laborious or prolix,—embodying the ripe conclusions of thoughtful research, and providing both narrative and commentary, in that tranquil, meditative spirit, that clarity of judgment, and that gracious facility of style which come only from large experience, and which are possible only to a master of the literary art. Some of the early American writers were bigots, and their writings are harsh; but of all those writers Mitchell, working with fine intuition and a superlatively light touch, furnished a history that is rich with learning, delicious with gleams of playful humor, and charming with grace. Such antique worthies as Roger Williams, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Sewall, Timothy Dwight, John Trumbull, and Joel Barlow, described by an annalist who read not only their books but their minds, are made as actual as when once they lived.

Reading Mitchell is like strolling through the woods on a breezy summer day, with all its

pleasures of fragrant air, rustling boughs, bird notes, and the soft ripple of unseen brooks. His works fill many volumes, ranging backward over many years, but the earliest of them revealed the soul of the writer, and, except that he mellowed in time, he did not change. That same unity appeared in the character of Longfellow,—with whom, indeed, Mitchell was mentally and spiritually kindred. Readers who truly know the "Reveries of a Bachelor" and "Dream Life" comprehend the author of them, and, loving those books, have learned them by heart. Most persons, authors included, neither allow peace to others nor find it themselves. The human being who tranquillizes his fellow creatures is rare. Mitchell, from the first, allured his readers with gentleness and made them calm. Washington Irving spoke of having been drawn toward him by the qualities of head and heart in his writings; but he did not name them. Perhaps he would have mentioned, first of all, that quality of grace which diffuses peace,—that blending of dignity and sweetness which is at once the sign and the allurement of natural distinction. Mitchell never

stood in front of his subject, to ask attention to himself. Washington Irving had the same characteristic, and it was natural that they should be drawn together. In early life Mitchell was much under the influence of that veteran. "Dream Life" was dedicated to Irving, and some of the best glimpses that can be obtained of that revered author are found in Mitchell's written recollections of him. The disciple, however, was not an imitator. Mitchell's papers on "The Squire" and "The Country Church" are as characteristic as anything in "The Sketch Book," but their writer's style is his own. Authors, like actors, run in mental families, and the families are not numerous. Mitchell is of Irving's mental family, and both of them consort with Goldsmith.

Another of his allurements is the great wealth of feeling implied in his works, and still another is his passionate love of Nature. He did not write many stories, but the ingredients of a superb novel are in the English and Italian episodes of the "Reveries of a Bachelor"; and surely the pen that could describe the touching incidents of the "Rainy Day at Armagh," in

the " Seven Stories," need not have shrunk from the field of fiction. No novelist has shown a deeper knowledge of youth, a keener sympathy with its sentiments, passions, and aspirations, or a broader capacity to see, as a whole, the relations of human beings through the operation of love, and therewithal the elemental experiences of human life. " Every man's heart," he said, " is a living drama. Every death is a drop scene. Every book that records sentiment or passion is only a faint footlight, to throw a little flicker on the stage." It is the contemplative spirit that speaks, rather than the weaver of fiction, and such a character clearly predicates a career of reticence and works of meditation. Mitchell's writings put much in little, and are addressed to persons who can think. They do not attempt to astonish, to dismay, or " to be knowing in brilliance." They are simple, sound, and true, like the heart from which they sprang. They have helped many an earnest soul to bear its burdens with cheerful patience, and that is why they are loved. Yet the literary art of them might almost equally well account for their fascination. If

his theme be only the sound of rain upon the roof, Mitchell endears it by some indefinable magic of touch. The fidelity and the quaintness of Izaak Walton and of White of Selborne live again, in the Edgewood books. In no other treasury can be found such sweet, artless, fragrant memorials of the early and the late poets, who lived close to Nature and were nestled in her bosom,—the Greek and Roman bards of rural life, and such moderns as Burns, Crabbe, Hogg, Shenstone, and Bloomfield. Turning the leaves of "Old Story Tellers," the reader seems to be in personal communion with cherished friends. De Foe, Swift, Goldsmith, Scott,—they are not merely names, but are living men: and all that body of literature is illumined with a droll, unobtrusive humor, as companionable as the singing of the kettle on the hob, when the lamps are lit at evening, or as the cheery flame of a wood fire on the broad hearth, before which you sit and dream, when all around is in shadow and all is still.

Among the letters that Mitchell addressed to me there is one, much prized, that affords a sig-

DONALD G. MITCHELL
("Ik Marvel")

nificant example of the sincerity and simplicity of his large mind:

My Dear Mr. Winter:

I cannot forbear thanking you for the very kindly,—tho' much too flattering way,—in which you speak of some of my little books.

I am all the more grateful since you are one of the very few writers of established reputation who have had the hardihood to speak an honest, undisguised word of approval, —without apologizing to the public for having been decoyed into reading books of sentiment, and without shame-faced allusion to the "callow days" or "green salad" days when such reading was permissible!

I don't mean to quarrel with any of the good friends who put such condescension in their praises: but I mean to thank *you* for something quite different—and *welcomer!*

I hope you have received a copy of "American Lands and Letters," with a slip testifying to the "kindly regard"

With which I am,

Ever truly yours,

Don'd G. Mitchell.

Edgewood, April 6, 1897.

ALBERT HENRY SMYTH

One of the noblest minds and gentlest spirits I have ever known was Albert Henry Smyth, whose affectionate friendship I had the peculiar

good fortune to possess during the last sixteen years of his life,—a life which was so auspicious to American Literature, and which was so suddenly and prematurely ended, while yet he was in the prime of his brilliant and beneficent career. Our first meeting occurred on shipboard, in 1891, —in the course of a voyage to that England, so dear to us both and in which we passed many days of happy companionship,—and the kindly regard for each other which then began only grew stronger and deeper with each succeeding year. Smyth was a native of Philadelphia, born on June 18, 1863, and in a suburb of that city he died, May 4, 1907, in the 44th year of his age. The ordinance of death, sooner or later, afflicts every heart, but it does not often happen that so many hearts are afflicted as were bereaved by the sudden death of Albert Henry Smyth. He was surrounded with affectionate friends. He was dearly loved. He was in the golden affluence of enjoyment and hope. He had only just completed and published his superb edition of the works of Franklin, together with his Life of that statesman. The echoes of his oratorical triumph

at Paris, where he spoke (April 20, 1906), at the international unveiling of the statue of the great philosoher, had not died away. He had gained an amaranth of fame; he was dearly loved; he was richly honored; and the pathway to yet more splendid achievement in letters and a yet wider circle of friends and ampler wealth of honors seemed opening before him, in one long vista of golden promise. His vitality, alike of body and mind, was so extraordinary that no thought of death could be associated with him. He seemed formed to lead battalions of thought and to endure forever. His countenance was the beacon light of hope and joy. He animated every mind with which he came in contact. He dissipated doubts of a glorious future and he dispelled dejection. He was a thorough scholar, and he used his scholarship to cheer the onward march, and not to dispense gloom. He was a natural orator. He possessed a wonderful memory, and it was richly stored with knowledge of the classic literature of all lands. He was a reverent student of Shakespeare, and he was entirely competent as a Shakespeare scholar: among his

works there is an admirable book on "Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre." He wrote a Life of Bayard Taylor and also a comprehensive and minute history of the magazines of Philadelphia and of the literary movement in that old city,—which he so much loved and in which he is tenderly remembered and deeply mourned. His ambition was to excel in learning and to augment the excellence of American Literature. He abhorred all "crank" movements and he denounced all efforts to corrupt the pure stream of literature with the erotic mush that parades itself under the name of "new thought." He was all that is meant by gentleman. Intellectual men find the strife of the world very hard, advocating that which is right, but the best that any intellectual worker can do is to follow in his footsteps. The loss of such a righteous force is unspeakable. His example remains.

I shall yield to the temptation here to preserve one of his letters, characteristic of the writer, and in itself both instructive and amusing, relative to the Bacon Humbug:

The Art Club, Philadelphia, February 5, 1902.

My Dear Winter:

This afternoon I lectured, to more than twelve hundred persons, upon Lord Byron, and when I stopped at the Club, jaded from a long day of unceasing labor, I found "The Tribune" awaiting me, with your Shakespeare and Bacon article.

What singular vitality that wretched hypothesis and fraud seems to have. "The worst is not, as long as we can say this is the worst." I thought we had sounded the lowest depth when Donnelly made his audacious bid for the shekels of the credulous. But Owens went far deeper, and now Gallup—Oh, Gallup has simply gone "out of all whooping." What remains? Will not some one prove that the plays themselves do not exist? that it is all "a phantasma and a hideous dream"?

Women and weak minds seem attracted to this mighty inquiry. Delia Bacon died in a mad-house. Mrs. Windle (or Swindle) died in a *maison de sante.* Mrs. Alaric Watts said she had had an interview with Bacon himself, and *he told her* that he *did* write the plays but that the truth would not be known for another year. Is all this an argument for, or against, Vassar, and Smith, and Bryn Mawr?

What a spanking Francis Bacon would have got from his tutor for talking of Titus An-drōn-i-cus, or of "the Nē-me-an lion's nerve"! And how dismayed his master would have been, at Trinity, upon finding Brutus reading, before Philippi, a book with *"the leaf turned down."*

"I was much amused, the other day, at Marston's exquisite exposure of the *fraud* in the Gallup bi-literal. Mrs. G., you know, found that Bacon had, with infinite pains, tucked away a translation of Homer within the texture of Burton's

"Anatomy." Strange to say, Bacon shows an intimate knowledge of *Pope's translation* of the Iliad, and quotes freely and liberally from it, wherever Pope canters off on an independent venture.

"Shakespeare und kein ende" wrote Goethe; and indeed the steady glow of his great fame attracts strange and feeble insects to it. We have books written to prove that Hamlet was a woman; books to explain Hamlet by the phases of the moon; and I possess a laborious German dissertation upon the identity of the chilblains of the courtier in "Hamlet" with the frozen toe of Thor, in the Teutonic mythology! You recall the old verses:

"With songs on his pontificalibus pinned
Next Percy the Great did appear,
And Farmer, who twice in a pamphlet had sinned,
Brought up the empiricial rear."

That "empiricial rear" stretches on into vague perspective, attended by Olympian laughter.

Please prove mathematically that Henry Irving wrote the Sketch Book. It is as easy as to demonstrate that the squares of quadrantal ursois are equal to minus unity.

It gave me a thrill of pleasure to see your handwriting again. I am very busy and have been taxed to the uttermost. I am homeless, and all my books are stored away in a large warehouse, and I am sufficiently miserable in consequence. It would do me a world of good to see you and to be refreshed and inspired by a talk with you. When you have a spare moment, will you not write me a brief note and tell me how you are and what is happening in your world.

I called at Edgewood during the Christmas holidays. Mitchell is fairly well, but tired and growing feeble.

God bless you and give you health and strength.

Ever yours,

ALBERT H. SMYTH.

Soon after the death of Smyth the following interesting letter about him was addressed to me by the poet Stedman:

2643 BROADWAY, May 22, 1907.

MY DEAR WILL:

Since your tribute to Albert H. Smyth appeared,—surprising me so much in every way, except in respect of its beauty and fitness,—I have been trying to write to you. Should have done so at once, except that, lately, I am very loth to add a featherweight to the burden which, at your age and mine, I know grows so heavy,—*so* heavy for you! And soon I was attacked by a brief illness from which I am just picking up. . . .

The fine memorial notice of A. H. S. startled me,—as well it might; for I had gone to the Century Club on the afternoon of May 5, expressly in response to a letter received from him, and had written him a careful reply, which must have reached his home on the morning of his death! . . .

Prof. Smyth, long an occasional correspondent of mine, and one who, in youth, had seemed to care for my advice and regard, must have written me almost his last letter,—perhaps his last, dated May 2. He wrote that Mr. Choate was nominating him for the Century; would I write in his favor, etc. So I went straight to the Club, on Friday, May 3,

found that Choate had not yet put him up; sat down and wrote him that I would keep watch, and do what he wished, and everything in my power.

As Smyth's letter, apparently, came from one in perfect health and hope, you can now understand how startled I was by your next day's announcement and eulogium.

Yesterday I had another such tragedy,—the dark shadow of one,—the instant killing of young Prof. Eastman, Boston "Tech," on the Back Bay. He was the pride of his profession, and recently married to a Norwich girl, almost a daughter to me. A sheer, reasonless, cruelty of haphazard!

Affectionately yours,

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

On the occasion of a visit to the old and deeply interesting city of Nottingham, England, in the autumn of 1897, I had the privilege, delightful and ever memorable to me, of a meeting with the poet Philip James Bailey, author of "Festus." That poem is not so widely read in our day as it was, many years ago, when it was first published; yet it is a great poem; magnificent equally with thought, imagery, and feeling, vital with splendid audacity, and marvellous with eloquence; and it is the most lucid and potent exposition that has been made, in English verse, of the min-

istry of evil. The first edition of "Festus" appeared in 1847, and it was immediately reprinted in America. Benjamin B. Muzzey, a Boston publisher, early perceived its value, and, ignoring the rights of the author, sent it forth in several shapes, notably with the honors of fine paper, large type, and illustrations by a favorite artist of that day, Hammat Billings. "In America," said the poet, in the course of his conversation with me, "my 'Festus' has passed through thirty editions, while in England it has slowly and painfully toiled through eleven; and from America I have never received a sixpence for it. But I am glad to think that I have many readers and friends in that great country."

Bailey, at that time, was eighty-two years old, but, although a little infirm, his mind was luminous and vigorous. I found him in a pleasant home, in the street called the Ropewalk, not far from the Castle of Nottingham, and we conversed in his drawing-room and in his study, and strolled in his garden. He was a man of medium height, of a sturdy figure, of a benign aspect, composed in manner, deliberate in movement, and

remarkable for his fine gray eyes and thick, bushy gray hair. He spoke in gentle tones, sometimes with humor, invariably with kindness and good nature, and he seemed the embodiment of peace. I have not met a person more serene, more content with fortune, more confident of the future. I had just received from an honored and beloved friend, Miss Ada Rehan, a copy of "Festus,"—the only one that could be found in the bookshops of Nottingham, the poem being bound under the same cover with Butler's "Analogy" and Combe's "Physiology," and upon the fly-leaf of that book Bailey wrote an inscription for me, copying a few favorite lines from his poem; and at parting he gave me a handful of flowers.

In answer to an inquiry as to Tennyson, he said: "William and Mary Howitt, many years ago, gave a party, at which we were to meet, and I attended it; but Tennyson did not come. Some time later Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall invited us, and this time Tennyson came, but I was unable to be present; and so it happened that we never met. But we have often exchanged letters." On the

mantelpiece of his drawing-room were two gold-rimmed goblets, to which he directed my attention. "Those glasses," he said, "were once owned by George IV and Queen Caroline." He asked me to inspect his library,—about five hundred volumes,—composed largely of pocket editions of the old Roman authors, and bearing marks of continual use. On the library table was a little folding desk, covered with green cloth, and, sitting before it, in the poet's chair, I was honored with a sight of a singular and precious manuscript that he had made, being a key to "Festus": in shape a semicircle, the lines radiating from centre to circumference, the celestial, intermediary, astral, and terrestrial scenes being distinguished by red, blue, and black ink; the whole showing the unity and harmony of his design. "My 'Festus,'" he said, "has too often been viewed as a disconnected and fragmentary work. It is, in fact, the blended result of one clear purpose."

After the death of his wife, in 1896, the poet dwelt in retirement. No mention was made of him during the Diamond Jubilee and no mark of

honor was conferred on him,—a singular omission, remembering his great achievement and exceptional worth. There are many impressive objects in Nottingham and its neighborhood: the birthplace of the poet Henry Kirke White; the caves beneath the castle, that are associated with the tragic story of Mortimer, Queen Isabella, and King Edward III; the spot where Charles I unfurled his standard for the fatal war with the Parliament of England; the treasures and the wonders of Welbec; the glories of Sherwood Forest; the silver cup from which King Charles took the sacrament, on the morning of the day when he was slain; the mournful relics of Byron, at Newstead Abbey, and the tomb in which his ashes repose, in the old, towered church of Hucknall-Torkard: but I saw there nothing more significant of intellectual greatness and the mutability of fame than the lonely, almost forgotten poet, Philip James Bailey.

The house, in Nottingham, in which Bailey was born,—a four-story brick building situated at Weekday Cross,—was demolished, in 1895, to make way for a railroad. Incidentally, as to the

domestic habits of the veteran author, a comic fact was mentioned to me by his nephew, George H. Wallis, Esq., an eminent scholar and a gracious gentleman, curator of the fine museum at Nottingham. We had been speaking of the hardy constitution of the poet, unimpaired even at his great age. "What do you think he has, for his midnight supper?" asked my friendly acquaintance. "You could never guess. Hot Scotch whisky and cold suet pudding!"

At this distance of time since the first publication of "Festus," and considering all, of literary import, that has come and gone, in the interim, readers can scarcely be expected to realize the extraordinary effect that was caused by that book, at the outset of its career in America in its stimulative impulse toward the reading of poetry. Whether because of its semi-sacred character, or its massive, diversified stature, or its happy blending of epical with dramatic form, or its fancied resemblance to Goethe's great poem of "Faust," —then much in vogue,—or for whatever other reason, everybody who read anything read "Festus," and in all literary circles it was long the

theme of interested discussion. Perhaps the public of sixty years ago was a more thoughtful public than that of to-day: it certainly was more tranquil, and there are observers who venture to believe that the authors prominent in that period made a nobler display than is made by the authors prominent now. "Festus" helped its age in many ways—in no way more than by satisfying and reinforcing the love of good literature, fostering romantic taste, and inculcating faith and hope:

> Evil and good are God's right hand and left.
> By ministry of evil good is clear,
> And by temptation virtue . . .
> Earth is the floor of Heaven; in all we see
> The great world-worker, the eternal Lord . . .
> All ages are His children.

Philip James Bailey died, at Nottingham, September 6, 1902, aged eighty-six years. These words of his may fitly close this frail memorial:

> Death is another life. We bow our heads
> At going out, we think, and enter straight
> Another golden chamber of the King's,
> Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

From the Bust in the Nottingham Art Museum

NOTES

NOTES

LONGFELLOW

At the time of Longfellow's death, in 1882, it was my privilege to offer, in the press, a humble tribute to his memory, and it chanced that I was gratified with many letters, all of them sympathetic and tender, relative to the loss of that great poet and noble person. A few of those letters, lovely in spirit and valuable as well for what they suggest as for what they contain, I can, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, venture to print, knowing that they will be welcomed and prized by lovers of Longfellow's writings, and that generous minds will not censure me for including words of personal commendation. It is gratitude, not vanity, that cherishes the approbation of genius and virtue.

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32 Park Avenue, N. Y., March 3, '82.

My Dear Winter:

Your article on Longfellow, in this morning's "Tribune," is so excellent that it paralyzed a little attempt of mine which

Dr. Adler asked me to write for his Memorial Service next Sunday. I wish your beautiful, touching, and appreciative notice could have been delivered in a church. A certain air of what I may call "sacredness" is around all your recorded memories, and therefore I think they should have been spoken on a Sunday. You know that I have long been an admirer of your prose style, and certainly no nobler specimen of it can be found than in your last article. The first portions were so good that I began to be critical. I said "Winter can't go on in this way through two columns without slipping into some specimens of bad taste." But, my dear fellow, you *never slipped,* in a single sentence, a single phrase, a single word. How rejoiced I was as I came to the fine conclusion! In haste,

Ever sincerely yours,

E. P. Whipple.

Brooklyn, April 14, 1882.

My Dear Mr. Winter:

Thanks for your kind letter—although it was a long time coming it was none the less welcome—and the Easter cards, which were very pretty—and the article and poem on Longfellow. I think the "Memoir" one of the best things you have done. I cried as I read, and think you must have cried as you wrote it. The poem I have hidden away with my few treasures, among which are several letters from Longfellow. I think it exquisitely pathetic. How proud and happy the good man of whom you wrote would have been could he have seen what sweet, kind things you have said of him. I spent a morning with him, at his request, just about four weeks before his death, and it was one of the happiest mornings of my life. I can see him yet so plainly as he stood at the

window (he was too ill to hand me to the carriage as he had always done), smiling and kissing his hand till a turn in the road hid him. The new fallen snow and the bright sunlight made him look radiant as he stood there. He had just received from Cross the inkstand of Tom Moore, which pleased him very much. He spoke of your Trip to England. Try and come to see me this week, and I will tell you all about him then.—Don't forget.

Your friend, as ever,

MARY ANDERSON.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON.
STATEN ISLAND, March 29, 1882.

MY DEAR WINTER:

My heart responds to your sorrowful note. I knew that Longfellow was very frail, but I was not ready for the sudden end. Fortunately I was able to go over on Saturday evening and stand by his coffin as the lid was closed forever. His face was perfectly peaceful, and the right arm was laid across his breast. It was in the large library in which I saw him living, for the last time, on the 1st of last July. No man living was so widely loved, no author was ever so personally lamented. How spotless his life! How pure and sweet his character! The most famous of Americans, and wholly free from envy, malice, and all uncharitableness.

If I were at home on Sunday I should ask you to come up. But I am not. Almost any evening but Tuesday and Sunday I am at home and generally by day. But you are a bird of night.

I do not forget that it was at Longfellow's we met, and our mutual regard has the benediction of his gracious memory.

The fathers are departing. I saw Emerson stand by the coffin and look at the dead face. But, in his broken state, the dead seemed happier than the living.

Yours always,

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

BOSTON, April 1, 1882.

MY DEAR MR. WINTER:

I thank you most warmly for your kind and feeling note. Although for the last few years I have seen comparatively little of Longfellow, he was always a living presence with me, and I have always been hoping that he might yet be able to be with us at the social gatherings where he was often present and always desired. What a beautiful memory he leaves! All speak in the same way of him,—so gracious, so gentle, so altogether lovely in his intercourse with young and old. A boy of twelve years old,—a stranger, one of the little army of autograph collectors,—came in just now and is staring round my library as I write. He went a fortnight ago to see Longfellow, who treated him with great kindness, and not only wrote him and his three companions their autograph, but gave them each a piece of cake, as if they had been his own grandchildren. Now, remembering how those visitors must have swarmed about and settled upon him, nothing shows more sweetly the loving-kindness of the dear Poet.

I have just received a very tender letter from Whittier, who is deeply affected by the loss which saddens us all. For myself I can truly say that the world is darker for me than before, and life more lonely. Yet I am so pressed upon by my daily duties, and often so fatigued by the burdens which are laid upon me, that I find fault with myself for wanting the vacant hour in which to mourn over our irreparable loss.

This winter has been a very hard-working one for me, and yet little has been accomplished in it beyond my routine duties. But I find that, at seventy-two years, the thirty-two high stairs at the College are harder to climb than they were at half that age, when I began climbing them. My hundred lectures tire me more than they did. Add to this a correspondence which I hardly know what to do with, and you will understand that I can hardly indulge much in the train of saddening remembrances which gather round me with each year, and of which this last sorrow, though not wholly unprepared for it, is one of the deepest and most lasting.

I have read your article as well as your letter. Both overflow with the tender sensibilities which belong to your delicate and impressionable nature: your warm heart will comprehend what I mean.

With kindest remembrances I am,

Very sincerely yours,

O. W. Holmes.

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23 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, N. Y., April 3, 1882.

Dear Mr. Winter:

I write to thank you for your most interesting "Tribune" letter and tender poem in memory of Longfellow.

The poem I have just mailed to Mr. Whittier.

It was only for the last few years of his life that I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Longfellow personally, but that acquaintance enables me to understand and appreciate all you say of him.

In February he wrote me of his feebleness as if it were but temporary; and this gave me such hope and cheer about him that I was quite unprepared to hear of his death.

I thank you again for your letter and poem, which I have read, as will so many others, with sympathetic tears.

Very truly yours,

EDNA DEAN PROCTOR.

GEORGE ARNOLD

AMONG the many letters that Longfellow kindly sent to me there is one that I shall venture here to print, because of its reference to the poems of my dear old comrade George Arnold, who died in 1865, at the age of thirty-one. Those poems were collected and published by me, with a memoir of the author.

NAHANT, July 23, 1866.

MY DEAR MR. WINTER:

Accept my thanks for the copy of Arnold's Poems, which you were so kind as to send me, and which I have read with great interest and pleasure. He was a true poet; and I do not think that you have overstated his merits in your Introductory Sketch, which is a graceful tribute to your friend.

I am glad to learn from your note that you are coming in this direction, and I hope you will find time to run down to Nahant, where you will be very welcome. Last summer you did not come, though you half-promised me to do so. Pray do not fail this year, as it is a long while since I had the pleasure of seeing you.

With great regard,

Yours truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

In the sympathetic yet eminently judicious life of Cowley that was written, after the death of that remarkable poet, by his affectionate friend Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, there is a significant admonitory passage:

"Letters that pass between particular friends" (so wrote the Bishop), "if they are written as they ought to be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light. They should not consist of fulsome compliments, or tedious polities, or elaborate elegancies, or general fancies; but they should have a native clearness and shortness, a domestical plainness, and a peculiar kind of familiarity, which can only affect the humor of those to whom they were intended. The very same passages which make writings of this nature delightful amongst friends will lose all manner of taste when they come to be read by those that are indifferent. In such letters the souls of men should appear undressed, and in that negli-

gent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets."

The law as to the use of private letters could not be better formulated; yet there are occasions when, rightly and beneficially, it can be relaxed. Literature would be much impoverished, for example, lacking the familiar letters of Thomas Gray, William Cowper, and Sir Walter Scott. It has happened to me, in the course of a long life, to receive many letters from many interesting persons,—some of them the " heirs of fame." That fine poet the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich was an intimate friend of mine during the greater part of his life. We first met in 1855, and from that time till his death, March 19, 1907, our cordial friendship remained unbroken. We had maintained an active correspondence for several months before we became personally acquainted,—he being then resident in New York and I in Cambridge, Mass. Aldrich was an exceedingly interesting person in his youth, and he retained his youthful spirit and personal charm till the end of his days. Some

of my lamented comrade's letters, addressed to me long ago,—before experience, care, and the reserve that comes with years had, in any degree, checked his enthusiasm,—show such a gentle, affectionate nature, and reveal their writer in such a charming light, that I need not hesitate, now that the grave has closed over him, to make them known, at least in part. They denote him truly, depicting him in words that came direct from his heart, and that never till now have been seen by any eyes but mine. They accomplish a portrait of the poet as he was in his ingenuous boyhood,—a portrait which observers of character and students of literature, appreciative of the fine achievement of his mature genius, are likely to welcome, since, perhaps, it suggests additional reason why his memory should be cherished. A few of them, indeed, may seem too much charged with romantic affection for his correspondent; nevertheless, because they show the generosity of his nature. the beauty of his character, and the variety of his mind, they shall be given without modification, and in the belief that the disclosure of them

will be ascribed to the right motive, and not to vanity.

. . . . .

In the midsummer of 1855 Aldrich was convalescent after a serious illness, and on July 9 he wrote:

How sweet is the letter that comes to a sick-room, fresh from the hand of a very dear though unseen friend! And how sweet it is, when one is just convalescent enough to sit before a comfortable writing desk and languidly hang thoughts, like a week's washing (pardon the homely comparison), upon a *line,* to watch "the swell mob of characters," as Tom Hood says, creep gradually over the page! This pleasure is mine now, dear Winter, and a sort of dreamy joy comes over me, when I think how very soon your eyes will run over these lines,—almost following the point of my pen.

How odd that I have never seen you! How strange that we have looked into each other's hearts, and never touched a hand or exchanged a glance! If we should never meet, I shall always think of you as one of the delicious phantoms which have, before now, flitted through the heaven of my fancy, leaving me only a dim conjecture of what it might have been. I cannot see you; but I can send you my mind, the better part of me, which cannot be taken away. This invisible God in us,—this living, eternal mind,—is an awful boon. My brain is so heavy that it *won't* think, but my heart thinks, instead, and if there was ever a letter written from the soul this is one,—so don't read it carelessly. . .

The rest of the letter relates to personal experience, essentially private. The letter that follows is here given because it enables me to place a white rose of honor and constant affection on the grave of a forgotten poet—Albert Laighton, of Portsmouth.

New York, July 17, 1855.

My Dear Friend:

Your last was read with peculiar pleasure. I am growing to love your letters and yourself very much. Will Winter has become a fixture in my stock of pleasant thoughts, and I look forward with perfect joy to the time when I shall grasp his hand and hear his voice. It is something more than mere curiosity. It is affection and respect which make me wish to meet him.

And you, dear Winter, have excited more than a common interest in the bosom of one I love almost as well as life; nay, better, for I would lay down mine to save his. He writes very tender, beautiful verse. . . . I enclose a notice which I wrote some time since of his poetry. . . . Observe the beauty in "Joe" and the pathos running through "The Tress of Hair." I sent him one of your early letters to read (he resides in Portsmouth), and, to show in what light he holds you, I will use his own words:

I read his letter with much pleasure; in fact I read it three times over, and after every reading I wanted William Winter close beside me, that I might give him a cordial grasp of the hand and say "God bless you and godspeed you in your divine calling!" I should say of him thus: he has a noble, generous, self-sacrificing spirit; a gentle, trusting, child-like soul. His soul has "imbibed more shade

than sun." He has a strong desire for *friends*, and, in his own simple, comprehensive language, "what he loves he loves very dearly." Do I misjudge or overrate him?

And I wrote to my friend: "No, you neither misjudge nor overrate him. William Winter is very noble and good, I am sure, and more worthy of your friendship, in a hundred ways, than I am."

Albert Laighton,—whom afterward I met, on the occasion of a visit to the quaint, picturesque, interesting city of Portsmouth, and who became a close friend and a correspondent of mine,—was a native of that place, born in 1829. He passed his life in Portsmouth, dying there on February 7, 1887, aged fifty-eight. He was a man of sweet and placid temperament, simple and dignified in manner, self-contained and unobtrusive in character,—one of the gentlest and best of human beings. He was beloved by all who knew him well, and even those persons who saw him only once imbibed a deep and lasting impression of his innate nobility. His name was seldom seen in print, and his writings are, practically, unknown. He was a poet of the affections. His poems are marked by simplicity, grace, fancy, tender feeling, earnest religious

sentiment, and melodious versification. A collection of them was published in Boston, in 1859. The principal poem, written in the heroic measure, was delivered, by its author, before the United Literary Societies of Bowdoin College, on August 3, 1858. The book contains forty-nine other pieces, among the most characteristic of which are "The Missing Ships," "To My Soul," "Found Dead," "Joe," "The Tress of Hair," and "The Song of the Skaters."

Laighton was not the bearer of a great poetical message, but he sang sweetly of love, confident faith, and resignation; as a verbal artist he was felicitous in phrase; he used rich colors with dainty skill; and his style possesses the merit of simplicity. That sympathetic critic the venerable Andrew P. Peabody, D.D., writing in "The North American Review," of which he was the editor, in 1859, said of Laighton's poems: "They are the unforced, inevitable overflow of a true poetic nature, in harmony with all things beautiful; they are smooth and harmonious in rhythm; choice and polished, yet without conceit or mannerism, in diction; rich and glowing

in imagery; and lofty, while unexaggerated, in sentiment."

During his last days Laighton suffered much, but a long agony was endured by him with the silent, gentle patience which is ever the denotement of a manly character. Citation of a brief passage, representative of his poetic quality, will not, perhaps, be deemed inappropriate. These lines depict the midnight sky in winter:

. . . . .

Go, lift to heaven, at night, thy wondering eyes,
And read the starry language of the skies!
See Cassiopeia in her regal chair,
The golden trail of Berenice's hair;
The Northern Crown, whose jewels far outshine
All earthly gems and gleam with light divine;
The Pleiades and Lyra's shining strings;
The Silver Swan, the Dove with outspread wings;
The Twins, that tread their path with one desire,
The Great Orion with his belt of fire!
Or turn from these and watch the Northern Lights
With jewelled feet ascend the heavenly heights;
While with fantastic shapes they haunt the brain;—
A sky of amber streaked with silver rain;
A blaze of glory, heaven's resplendent fires;
A Temple, gleaming, with a thousand spires;
A sea of light that laves a shore of stars;
The gates of heaven; swift-rolling, fiery cars;

A golden pulse, quick beating through the night;
Contending armies, mailed in armor bright;
A gauzy curtain, drawn by unseen hands,
Night's gorgeous drapery looped with starry bands;
Vast, burning cities that lie far away;
Blushes on Nature's face—pale ghosts of day;
A boundless prairie swept by phantom fire;
The vibrant strings of some gigantic lyre;
Emblazoned chariots ever skyward driven;
God's finger writing in the book of heaven;
The flaming banner of the North unfurled,—
The mystery that dares a boasting world!

. . . . . .

NEW YORK, July 25, 1855.

MY KIND AND DEAR FRIEND:

Your letter, with its autobiographical touches at the end, was deeply interesting, and you know, or ought to know, that I thank you sincerely for the pleasure your generous paper gives me. You have a way of saying a great deal in a very few simple words,—a condensed style, so suggestive and euphonious to read, and yet so difficult to attain! Then there is such a heart of kindness in your paragraphs, so noble and strong, that I can feel it, unseen, throbbing against my own. I think we shall be even better friends than now, when we meet. Our tastes, in very many things, are alike, for often, under the cloak of quaint words, I have found the pulses of your thought to agree with mine.

You wish to make an "apology" for certain bits of truth which you gave me, in your critique of "The Bells." I shall not admit of it, for your strictures were *just,* and it is not

your better sense, but your friendship, that would take them back. Love, affection, or gratitude make poor critics.

I do not know what to say about your making extracts from my poor letters to send to Mr. Longfellow. The deep and growing love I bear him and the earnest words with which I told you of it I never meant for *his* eyes, only *yours*, dear Will. But please do not neglect to send me the promised MS. . . .

It gives me pleasure to know that you think kindly of Albert Laighton. He is modest and noble. I have been intimate with him several years, and have not found a grain of dross in his nature. His heart was stamped in God's own mint, Heaven. I make all my friends love each other.

. . . . . .

The period of these letters was opulent in literary harvest. James T. Fields had devised a particularly neat, modest, pleasing style of brown cloth binding for the books that were published by the famous house of Ticknor & Fields, and volumes of special value,—by Motherwell, Alexander Smith, Tennyson, Longfellow, "Barry Cornwall," Henry Giles, E. P. Whipple, De Quincey, Mrs. Howe, and other important writers,—were pouring from the press, to be eagerly welcomed and greedily devoured. The letter that follows will indicate the active interest that Aldrich felt in that teeming time

of literary activity, and will illustrate the critical bent of his mind in youth. The first allusion is to Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish," which was published in association with a considerable number of lyrics.

August 15, 1855.

. . . The announcement of a new volume by Longfellow does not create such a furor as might have been expected; nevertheless his poem will be everything that lofty genius, learning, and a *quiet soul,* like his, can make it. . . . It is a pleasure to quote his poetry; to tell the world, in prose ever so humble, that it warms the heart like a dream of heaven. "My Lost Youth" is exquisite,—one of those subdued *twilight* poems which he knows so well how to write. The critical objection to his "long, long thoughts" is very "far fetched": but then, dogs *will* bark at the moon. . . .

Some of the extracts from "Maud" I do not like,—because the measure is, unfortunately, long. The verses beginning "Come into the garden" and those beginning "Still on the tower stood the vane" are Tennyson himself. Thoughts, to him, must come in swarms. I worship his books. There is one little song of his that haunts me. You know it and have admired it as much as I: "It is the Miller's Daughter." Is not that poem perfect?

I hope Bailey's "Mystic" will not be mystical in reality, as his writings are very apt to be. "Festus" has embalmed his name. He never can be forgotten while beautiful, passionate poetry has a lover. He is sometimes obscure, and, to my mind, Obscurity is no attribute of Poetry. There are many verses famous among men of letters (I do not refer to

Bailey's particularly) which, to the mere matter-of-fact reader, seem downright dulness; yet an indescribable beauty runs through them, that cannot be analyzed; it can only be *felt*. Such verses I am not slow to love and praise; but many of Bailey's lines have to be turned, and fingered, and taken apart, like a Chinese puzzle, to get at their meaning; and then, like the puzzle, they are not worth the trouble. This, I think, is a serious fault, and too general among our noblest poets. . . .

You will think I have grown immensely critical, "all of a sudden," for I have never ventured to give you so much criticism before. I have been re-reading the critiques that you so kindly sent to me, and think you will be a great critic, one of these days. You look into a thing with much judgment and "sum up the case" like a lawyer. . . . You speak of giving me another review. If you do I shall read it with joy and gratitude: but let me advise you not to permit your full, warm heart to throb in your eyes and blind you to my rhythmic faults. You have received, before this, a copy of "Babie Bell": it is one I have revised and corrected. Babie has been a very fortunate child. . . .

Prentice's most *poetical* poem is in the Knickerbocker Gallery, one of the finest books ever published and a rare tribute to Louis Gaylord Clarke, editor of "The Knickerbocker Magazine" (who has treated me kindly). . . .

You were not wrong in your idea of Griswold's "Poets." It is a poor affair. Half of the poetry (?) would have been rejected by a country editor, and the biographical notices are weak. I frequently meet him. He says he has a new volume of "Poets" in contemplation. May their shadows never be less! . . .

Tennyson is a King of simplicity and beauty. I read his

"Two Voices" every other day. "The Princess" is a masterpiece. The man that fails to appreciate it must have very little soul. . . .

"The bard" in my book is meant for Gerald Massey. I have some of his poems, in his MS. His ballad of "Babe Cristabel" is wild, and full of Keats-like imagery. . . .

The wind that comes in at my open window brings the tones of the neighboring clock that has just sounded one. I must stand a few minutes at the window, to look at the camp-ground of the angels, with their starry watch-fires burning, and then—"to sleep, to sleep—perchance to dream." Good-night, my dear friend.

. . . . . .

It will be rightly inferred, from the words which follow, that their writer had not yet outlived the time of hero-worship and romantic enthusiasm, but even a cynic may be pleased to be reminded that there is such a time, and that the passage through it is not the worst of human experience.

Writing to me, on September 30, 1855, Aldrich said:

To exchange words with one who gives gold for dross and pearls for pebble-stones *is* a pleasure; to examine those thoughts and to measure my correspondent's pulses with my own is a *study,* in his acceptance who loves to watch the different phases of different lives. . . .

I must thank you for the MS. and the message which ac-

companied it. When you write to Mr. Longfellow, say that I am grateful for his kindness and that the few lines he sent are dearer to me than fine gold. I have been re-reading your pen portrait of him—a beautiful and finished picture. No photograph could have given me his features more admirably. A fine engraving of him hangs before me, surrounded with those of Willis, Bryant, Morris, Holmes, and Fitz-Greene Halleck—who, by the way, says that there is not a line in "Babie Bell" which he could alter, and other things particularly pleasing to me. His kind words were not written to me, however, but in a note to Mr. Cozzens, of "Putnam's Monthly."

Last Thursday evening I attended the dinner given by New York Publishers to American Authors. It *is* well enough for them to give the poor dreamy devils something to eat, now and then. Authors, before now, have been hungry enough to eat poison. . . . The speeches, as a general thing, were dull. . . . It was a glorious sight, and I wished a hundred times that W. W. was with me. . . .

Remember me to Mr. Haskell, kindly. [The reference is to Daniel N. Haskell, at that time editor of "The Boston Transcript."] Most men have an anatomical arrangement called a heart, which is supposed to be located in the breast. I say *supposed* to be; for, as they seldom show any, its existence is merely a supposition. But Mr. Haskell's heart, I am inclined to think, beats in every vein.

. . . . .

In his early letters to me Aldrich frequently refers to Longfellow, and he discloses, amply and tenderly, a trend of thought and feeling that

he never ceased to follow. Thus, on October 27, 1855, he wrote:

I have a thousand things to tell you which I cannot write to my satisfaction, for pen and ink are poor substitutes for lips. There is something in a voice which gives vitality and passion to words; and oftentimes, when I hang over the fine trembles of a line which some dead poet has left to the world, I could weep to think of *the dead voice*. Why could he not have left us that? I never read Longfellow, but I long to catch the modulation of his voice, and I break one of the Ten Commandments by envying my friend Winter, whose privilege it is to write to him and speak to him.

In a letter dated November 28, 1855, he wrote:

Have I ever spoken to you of Miss Alice Cary? I spent last evening with her, and had a cosy talk about books,—she and I alone. She is so beautiful, and simple, and good that I love her. She has written some beautiful poetry. I place her at the very head of American female poets. . . .

I once saw Mr. Longfellow, in Ticknor's book-store. It was a long time ago; about the time the "Golden Legend" was published. He was speaking, I think, with Fields, and I did not know who he was until he had left the place. Angels sometimes stand beside us, and we know them not. . . .

"Daisy's Necklace" will be bound, in a week or so. You shall have an early copy. What do you think of "Dred"? How tame it seems beside Reade's "Susan Merton"! I think that novel is one of the noblest I ever read. The prison-scene is beyond anything Dickens has done, in the

same line. What wonderful vitality and sense of nature run through Reade's prose!

. . . . .

In after years Aldrich acquired,—as most men do,—the "wordly wisdom," as it is called, which restrains sentiment and cools enthusiasm; but his feelings were not less deep because less freely expressed. Pages could be filled with extracts from his "wise" letters. Selection, however, continues to be attended with embarrassment, because scarcely one letter among hundreds can be found that does not contain words of personal commendation. Soon after our first meeting, which occurred in the autumn of 1855, he wrote:

I was overjoyed to meet you, but a variety of other causes worked upon me and made me not myself. My meeting with you has not broken a link of my love for you. You are older looking than I had pictured you, and a trifle more thoughtful.

The letters thus far given show the sweet, ingenuous nature of the poet, as he was in his enthusiastic youth. The selections that follow,—after a considerable gap of time, during which, however, he wrote to me very constantly,—afford a glimpse

of him as he was in after life. On October 31, 1880, he wrote to me: " I have just returned from watching at the deathbed of my uncle, Mr. Frost, a faithful, good friend of my boyhood, and am heavy-hearted."

After he had occupied for some time the position of editor of " The Atlantic Monthly " Aldrich wrote:

March 8, 1881.

DEAR WILL:

. . . The editorial chair of the Atlantic Monthly is not the piece of furniture I would select for comfort! My old bamboo lounge at Ponkapog is worth a thousand of it. I don't have time to breathe.

If that is O'Brien's poem, it is the best he ever wrote. Here and there I catch the tone of his voice. That wild fancy, in the second stanza, about the floating yellow hair of the drowning sun, seems like O'Brien at his very best. The poem is wholly new to me. . . .

In great haste, as this writing shows,

Always truly yours,

T. B. A.

I have come to the conclusion, [he wrote to me (1884)] that more than half of the mischief done in this world is done with the best intentions. Look at the shortsighted, intolerant prohibitionists, the howling woman suffragists and the roaring maniacs who are banging their heads against both sides of the tariff fence. They all mean well—confound them!"

59 Mount Vernon Street, Boston,
March 7, 1891.

Dear Will:

I have only now got back to my den in Mount Vernon Street, where I find two welcome letters from you. That you like my new book gives me great pleasure, but the earlier letter, in which you express your warm personal affection, will ever be sacred and precious to me. I am glad you wrote those pages, and did not withhold them. There is not an affectionate word in the letter that I might not have spoken these thirty years and more. That night at Barrett's, when I glanced down and saw you sitting there—the one familiar face among all those strange faces—my mind instantly went back to the period when I lived in Portsmouth and you in Cambridge, each standing on the brink of life, ready to plunge, and not knowing whether we could swim or not. That a memory of those old days should have come to you also is not strange; for have we not more than once felt impelled, at the same hour and day, to write to each other, after two or three years of silence? I leave unsaid a hundred things which I would like to say here; but I am in the middle of a magazine story, and I must not let my pen run away with me.

I shall look with interest to the coming of the Douglas book. Those volumes of yours about England are the loveliest things that have been done in this kind. Your dramatic writings have won you great distinction, but here are your true themes, your destined work, and here you are easily at your best. Irving lived among those scenes you love, but he never nestled so close to the poetic heart of England as you have. Your plan of bringing prose and verse together is good and has a touch of novelty. I've just been rereading the

Elegy on the Death of Longfellow, in the English Rambles. It would enrich the collected lyrics of any poet living. The diction is large and pure, and that refrain of the wild March winds wailing through the stanzas "takes me mightily," as Mr. Pepys would say. And now, good-by, and God be with you. Your affectionate friend,

T. B. Aldrich.

P. S.—I failed to put my name on the fly-leaf of "The Sisters' Tragedy" because the book was published and mailed during my absence from home. Some day I will do so.

T. B. A.

Mount Vernon Street,
October 22, 1891.

Dear Will:

Those dramatic orations of yours are as wise and touching as anything I ever read. The book has been a great pleasure to me, these two days past, up in my workshop under the leads. I am very sorry I did not hear you say all those sensible and prophetic things.

I sent to you yesterday, to the care of Edwin, at the Players, a proof of the Century portrait. Sometime when you are uptown, look in at the Players and get it.

I hope that all is well with you and yours. Some one dear to me dies whenever I go abroad. This time Lowell. I have written a poem about him. I trust you will like it when you read it, in the December Scribner's.

Ever affectionately yours,

Tom.

There is, probably, no author who has not suf-

fered from the exactions of strangers who insist upon asking all sorts of services—the writing of autographs, the reading of manuscripts, the impartment of counsel, the exercise of personal influence, etc.; innumerable requests being made, all of which require answer. Aldrich, in this letter, murmurs a gentle protest against this form of imposition:

Boston, October 3, 1892.

Dear Will:

It was very kind and thoughtful of you to send me those Tribunes containing your tender monody on Curtis and the not less admirable tribute in prose. I should have been sorry to miss them, and I should have missed them. Last year Lowell, and now Curtis, and Whittier, and Parsons! How rapidly the world is growing poorer!

The other day I lounged with a fieldglass on the deck of the City of Paris, and tried to pick out your particular nest on the lovely flank of Staten Island. I wondered which was the New Brighton landing and if Curtis's house was visible from my point of view. And I wanted to come ashore!

The health officers held us at anchor for eight mortal hours off Staten Island. How comfortable the little village looked, and how deliciously cool and green the grass was, in protected dells here and there! The hollows seemed like great goblets of *crème de menth!* My eye had got tired of drinking sea water and wanted something stronger. I've a

great respect for the solid earth. The sea was a mistake—a sort of *topographical* error!

I hope you and yours are well. I have a score or two of things to say to you, but not time to say them in. Letters, letters, letters! Those of an old friend are ever welcome, but—the stupid strangers who make life a burden to me! Half of my waking hours are wasted on persons who have no business to write to me, and yet must needs be treated courteously, since they are courteous. I forgot to say that I had a joyous after the theatre supper, at the Lyceum, with Irving and Ellen Terry, and la belle Sarah Bernhardt with her unravelled hair. The first two said pleasant things about you to me. I am always ready to listen when folks talk so.

Affectionately yours,

Tom.

Aldrich earnestly wished to excel in the field of the drama. He wrote two plays that were acted, "Mercedes" and "Judith," both of which possess elements of dramatic force and attributes of poetic beauty.

Milton, Mass., April 18, 1893.

Dear Will:

I am glad that your touching and thoughtful address on Curtis has been put into permanent form. The little book followed me out here, and got an immediate reading, though I was up to my eyes in a belated piece of fiction. As I went from page to page I regretted that I did not have the pleas-

ure of hearing you pronounce those clear-cut sentences. I know that you spoke them admirably, and they must have helped you, for they have an air as if they would lend themselves graciously to the lips. Thanks for the volume; it shall have a place with its brothers.

I closed my house on Monday last, intending to start for Chicago on the 26th; but Mr. Palmer is going to bring out my bit of tragedy ("Mercedes") on the evening of May 1st, and I shall wait over to see it. I hope the thing will not fall quite flat. If Lester Wallack, in 1866, had not kept a play of mine six months, and then returned it to me, *with the seals unbroken,* I should, probably, have been a writer of dramas instead of a writer of lyrics. Without breaking those seals myself I put that MS. on the coals, in my room in Hancock Street, and gave up the idea of being Shakespeare! I was one of those Shakespeares that get "stuck on the horizon," to use Lowell's delightful phrase. Ever yours, T. B. A.

I had told my old friend of my intention to publish the Life of Edwin Booth and to dedicate the book to him, as one of that great actor's most intimate and beloved friends, and this was his reply:

MILTON, MASS., May 11, 1893.

DEAR WILL:

On returning from New York I picked up a cold on the lungs, and am sitting up to-day for the first time since Sunday. I can write only a few lines. I saw dear Edwin for

a moment, and said farewell to that sweet soul. He did not know me until the instant I touched his hand, and then he smiled, and said "Tom Aldrich!" Immediately his mind was gone again, and he turned vacant eyes upon me. That was our parting.

To have my name associated with the beautiful studies you have made of his character and his genius will be a great pleasure and honor to me. You are Edwin Booth's authentic biographer.

"Mercedes" was a success beyond my hopes. All the leading journals had favorable words for it. The Tribune's criticism was most kindly fair. You being absent, not one of the dramatic critics was known to me personally, or even by name. The verdict was influenced by nothing but the evidence. I am happier over it than if I had ten books succeed! Mr. Palmer gave the play a beautiful setting, and it was finely acted. Miss Julia Arthur has passion and insight, and made a personal hit. She will be as fine as the finest, five years from now.

I've ever so many things to say, but the doctor forbids me to do anything but keep quiet.

With love,

Tom.

I've not thought of much these last few days but Edwin, lying there at the Players, waiting for Death. His face has kept coming to me out of the darkness of my room.

Edwin Booth died, at the Players, June 7, 1893. My memoir of him was published in the following autumn, dedicated as follows:

To
Thomas Bailey Aldrich,
Remembering Old and Happy Days,
I Dedicate This Memorial
Of Our Friend and Comrade,
Edwin Booth,
Forever Loved and Honored
And Forever Mourned.

"There is a world elsewhere."

It is to the "Life and Art of Edwin Booth" that the subjoined letter refers:

PONKAPOG, Nov. 1, 1893.

DEAR WILL:

Your book reached me last evening, and I read in it, far into the night, with what interest I need not say. It is a complete record. The man we knew and the man the world knew are here drawn at full length. Hereafter others will, doubtless, attempt to write of Edwin Booth, but they will have to come to your pages for authentic material, whether of biography or criticism. Everything that befell him was on a large scale—his triumphs and his calamities. I count it one of his *great* pieces of good fortune that he had a wise and loving chronicler like you. I was glad to see Launt Thompson's noble bust among the illustrations,—which are admirable as a whole. I liked Mr. Scott's crayon the best.

Sargent's portrait comes out well, and the Iago is a wonderful bit of photography. Your volume needs nothing but

an alphabetical index of names. I was at first a little doubtful of the footnote on page 156,—my impression of that burial scene was so inadequately expressed in those few hastily-written words; but perhaps the reader will read between the lines, and let his sympathy fill out the picture.

I notice that you speak of the Players as "The Players *Club*"; that is not the name of the association. It was my happy fortune to suggest the name. Booth, Barrett, Bispham, Hutton, and Benedict were present at the birth, which occurred on Benedict's steam yacht Oneida.

When your book passes to a second printing, as it will presently, will you please scrape away the comma after the word *sweet* in the 19th line of my poem, and change "*that*" to "*what*"? The line should read:

May know what sweet majestic face.

As I closed the volume last night I suddenly felt tired *for you*, thinking how hard you must have worked, these last three months. But here is your reward—you have made a permanent addition to our slender store of biography and our still more slender store of dramatic criticism. I wish *I* had written the book! And so, good night!

Ever affectionately,

Tom.

In the letter that follows there is playful allusion to an old associate of ours, long since passed away—Henry Clapp, editor and publisher of "The Saturday Press." That paper was started on October 23, 1858. One of Aldrich's early

publications was a poem, long out of print, called "The Course of True Love Never Did Run Smooth." A presentation copy, given to Clapp by the author, chanced to come into my possession, and, knowing that he preferred to suppress the work as an immature production, I sent it to Aldrich. Hence the reference to our departed comrade.

THE CRAGS, TENNANT'S HARBOR, MAINE.

July 30, 1895.

DEAR WILL:

I have to thank you for two books, each of which interested me in its own way. I hope that you will carry your "Shadows of the Stage" into many volumes and that I shall live to read them. The series,—valuable now,—will be *precious* hereafter. What if we had such a record of the stage in Shakespeare's time!

My long-forgotten little book, which you were so good as to send to me, is much more unsubstantial and ghostly than the slightest of your "Shadows,"—for they are of yesterday. How on earth did that particular copy fall into your hand? Did poor old Clapp express it to you C. O. D., by some supernatural messenger? The yellow leaves have a strange, musty odor: *Is* it brimstone?

I wish you were within hailing distance of this place. I should love to have you make us a visit.

Ever yours,

T. B. A.

ADA CAVENDISH

Reference to the plays of Wilkie Collins and to the actress by whom chiefly they were made known in America affords an opportunity here for a word commemorative of another cherished friend passed away, the English actress Ada Cavendish. There was, in the personality and in the art of that remarkable woman, a potent element of intellectual character. She did not conquer by beauty or authority, although she possessed both: she conquered by a winning intellectual personality, evinced in a charming, if sometimes irregular, method of art. The two parts in which, especially, she succeeded were *Mercy Merrick,* in "The New Magdalen," and *Miss Gwilt,* in "Armadale." In acting *Mercy Merrick* she had to impersonate a woman intrinsically good, but passionate and wayward, who, by sin and cruel circumstance, becomes enmeshed in a hopeless tangle of temptation and affliction; and she had to show her as passing through a succession of trials,

harrowing to the fine sensibility of womanhood, till, redeemed and purified, she found refuge if not peace in a saint-like abnegation of self. Her manifestation of that suffering woman's nature and experience was inspired with intense feeling, and it possessed the artistic merit of gradual development under the pressure of circumstance and of conscience.

There is so much immaturity and shapeless effort in the acting that is obtruded upon public observation that a performance instinct with clear purpose, invested with simplicity, and finished with even a little good taste, leaps at once into the favor of those persons who, capable of thought, are diligent in the service of the arts, making them indulgent of defects, because of sympathy with the right spirit. Ada Cavendish was well equipped thus to beguile judgment, for her face was luminous with hope and joy; her brilliant blue eyes were very gentle in expression; she had the sweet English voice; and her lithe, graceful, alert demeanor was a decisive allurement. As an actress she had not acquired that complete repose which only comes after long and varied experi-

ADA CAVENDISH

ence, and sometimes the stress of her emotion made her action precipitate and her speech vehement. But she expressed perfectly well the operation of remorse beneath an aspect of artificial mirth, the anguish resultant from conflict of good and evil impulses, and the submissive meekness of repentance; and therein she proved herself an actress of authority and skill.

She was exceptionally peculiar. She acted parts that are strongly contrasted,—*Mercy Merrick* and *Rosalind, Lady Teazle* and *Juliet,* for example,—but analysis of her acting, while it found beauties in each performance that she gave, discerned that her supreme fidelity of impersonation was elicited by a character strongly tinctured with eccentricity,—that, namely, of *Miss Gwilt,* in Wilkie Collins's "Armadale." To that part she was exactly suited by physical constitution and by sensibility and eccentricity of temperament. The lithe figure, the ruddy golden hair, the eagerly expressive countenance, the rich, sympathetic voice, the quick, sinuous movements, the capability of rapid transition from wild excitement to icy calm, the energy of mind, and the

depth of feeling,—all those attributes of the woman harmonized with the author's conception of the character and reinforced the player's expression of it. That personation disclosed and typified a nature essentially dramatic. There was a lack of symmetry in the method of it, but the spirit of it was perfect. The best actors, inevitably, are sometimes uneven in their art, but they are, in every fibre, suffused with magnetic fire. To see Ada Cavendish as *Miss Gwilt* was to feel the spell of intense emotion and potent intellectual force. The foaming cataract, the flying cloud, the swirl of angry waves and the rush of the tempest are symbols of the spirit that shone through her acting,—a spirit audacious with abounding vitality, tremulous with eager impulse, and pathetically suggestive of predestined sorrow. Toward the close of her life Ada Cavendish suffered much, but she met her fate with gentle resignation and noble fortitude. Her grave is in Kensal Green. Her memory survives in faithful hearts.

In closing these recollections I would venture to say that their defects are as well known to

me as they can be to even the sternest of my critical readers. The chief defect in them, to my mind, is one of omission,—for I have known many fine spirits whom I have not even mentioned in this chronicle of the Past. When I think of the affection that has been lavished on me, in the course of a long life, not free from hardship, trial, and sorrow, I am overwhelmed with a sense not only of gratitude but of unworthiness, and with a kind of pathetic awe. It is an error to judge harshly of human nature. With all its defects, it contains celestial attributes. No estimate that I have made of any human being is extravagant. I wish it had been possible, in this book, to celebrate my loved and revered friends among women, the noble and the gentle, who have brightened life and made it beautiful;—such women as Harriet McEwen Kimball, the author of the loveliest religious poetry that has been written in America; Louise Chandler Moulton, whose rare poetic genius, dimly understood or not even perceived by the social circle in which she moved, will grow more and more imposing in the lapse of time; and

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson (Mrs. Royal Cortissoz), whose lyre has sounded a note that is not less original than sweet. I intended to include in this volume a special, elaborate chapter on the life and writings of my old friend the poet Stedman, but I have not done so, being desirous that the first comprehensive memorial of him should be the biography that his beloved grand-daughter, Laura Stedman, is now writing. Many a comrade's name comes to my remembrance, that would warrant a chapter of reminiscence. Daniel N. Haskell, Frances A. Durivage, James T. Fields, Henry Giles, Benjamin P. Shillaber, Adam Wallace Thaxter, Anson Burlingame, George Lunt, Aurelius D. Parker, Stephen Gordon Nash, William Young (of the old "Albion"), William B. Reed,—with each of whom, and with others, I had pleasant communion and frequent and sometimes large correspondence, and each of whom would afford interesting studies of character and amusing chronicles of incident. But it is needful here to pause. There will come another occasion. Life, which is not devoid of romance now, was full of romance in

those other days, and it was as opulent and as dear to those who are gone as it is to those who remain. Nature is ever generous, providing opportunity to each generation, and remaining indifferent to all. The essential thing is the manner in which opportunity is improved. The present period, wonderful in material achievements and in acquisitions of science, is less remarkable for poetry, romance, and a civilization interfused with the dignity and sweetness of repose. The world, no doubt, is growing better, and not worse, for the liberation and the material comfort of mankind. Yet perhaps it could be declared, with some confidence, that the condition of literature and art fluctuates,—exhibiting at this time, an aspect of decline. There is much animalism in current literature,—notably that of fiction. There is much cynicism in contemporary thought. Among intellectual leaders there are few who cherish belief in anything, or even speak a word of cheer. Deference to the will of the multitude verges upon fear and is almost universal. No prophet can safely predict the next change; but, meanwhile, it seems indubi-

table that the great authors who enchained the heart and intellect of the community about the middle of the nineteenth century were more original, fertile, and brilliant than those who claim the public attention now. It does not follow that greater minds than those of either period will not presently appear. The complexion of American literature has undergone much change since the caustic, honest pen of Poe depicted the local " Literati " of his period, and much change has occurred since the eve of the Civil War. Other changes, no doubt, are imminent. Into that broad realm of speculation I do not venture. Enough if I have here succeeded in depicting at least a portion of the old literary time through which I lived, and some of the old friends whom it was delightful to know, and whose works are worthy of commemorative remembrance.

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